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PSM3

February 2008
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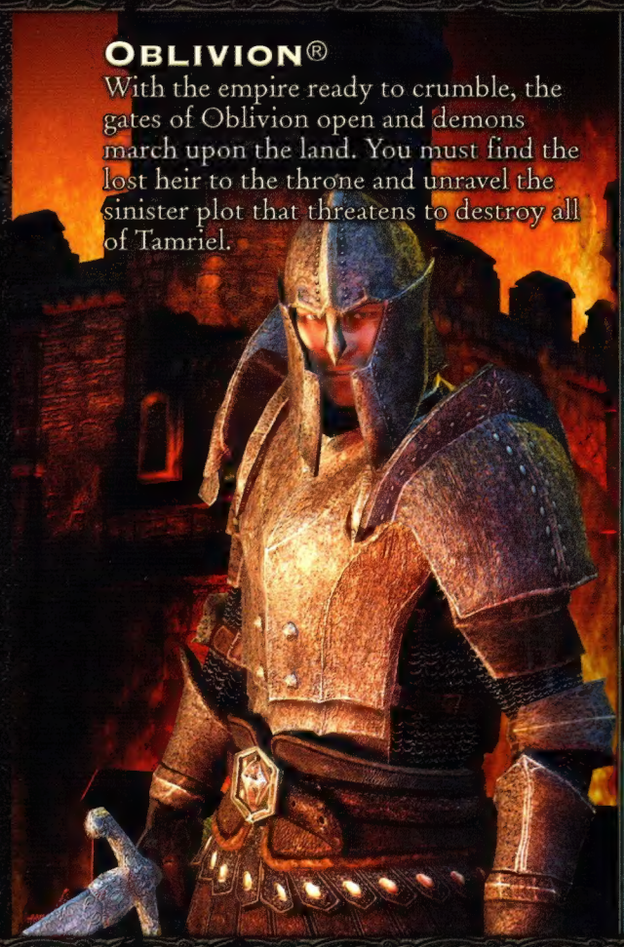

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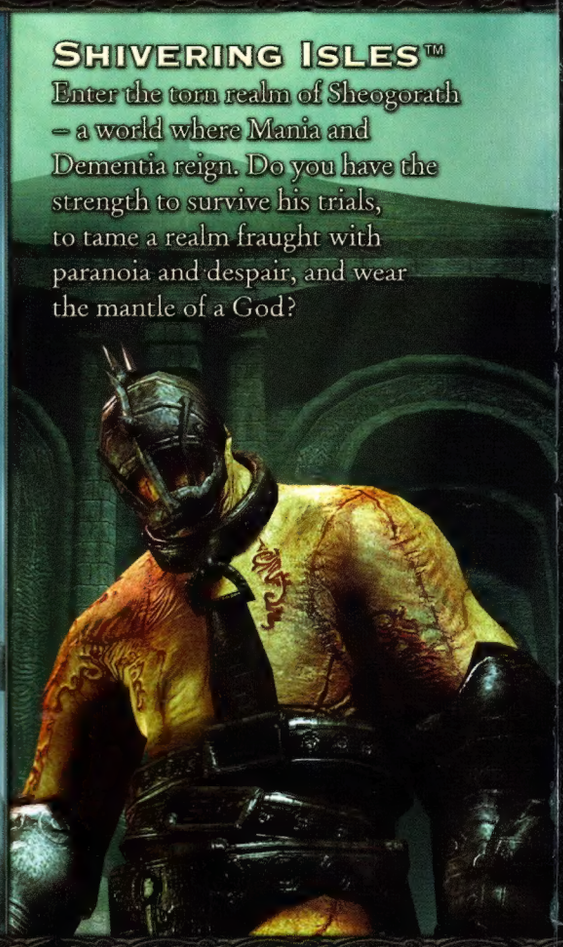

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PSM3 Start

"Sometimes, raising two fingers is best"

"Nothing is worth doing unless it means effort, pain, or difficulty," claimed former US president Theodore Roosevelt – which wasn't our first thought after dying for the seventeenth time during the insane Nero vs Dante scrap in *DMC4*, reviewed on p18. Rather than bend to criticism, it's as defiantly difficult, stylish and thrilling as ever. It's this unwavering vision – flaws and all – that make for the best games, rather than horrific designed-by-committee labours of compromise. Would Kojima remove Snake's moustache because 'focus groups' disliked it? Never – and that's why we love him. Don't think developers won't listen, as our investigation on p8 proves. Now go, there's 157 new games in this issue alone...

Daniel Dawkins Editor
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

In the making of this issue of PSM3... Half the time to do the same amount of work. Three pints of frustrated tears cried playing *DMC4*.

The PSM3 Promise

The sharpest opinions Every bit of the magazine is dedicated to giving you more information. If we're worried that a feature in a game isn't working, we'll not only tell you about it, but we'll have a word with the developer too.

The biggest games Fact is, if a game makes it into the pages of PSM3 then it's something worth knowing about. PSM3 says no to lazy page fillers and boring 'me too' games.

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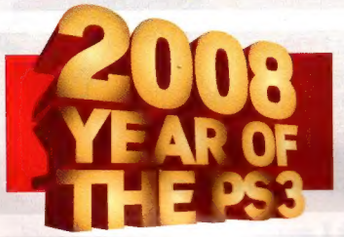
Three to read first...

"It's going to do whatever it likes and doesn't care what you think"

DMC4 isn't for those who don't like a considerable challenge – page 18

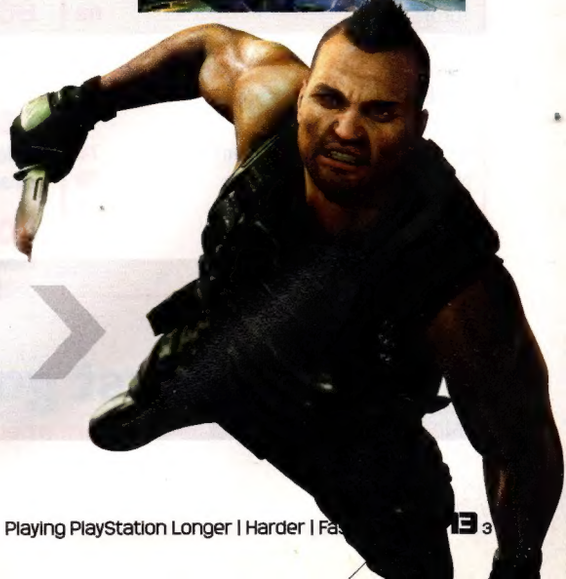


"2008 will be the year PS3 flourishes"

It's our massive **2008 Preview** – page 26

"Were it any manlier, it'd grow a moustache and punch you in the face"

Turok is hugely macho, but is there substance beneath the bulk? Page 68



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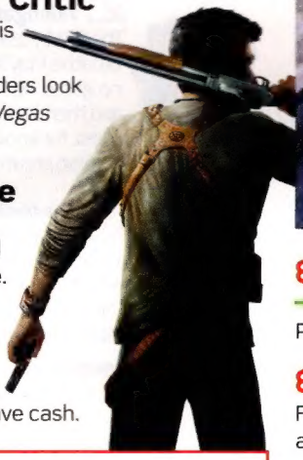

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"There are bits you'll love and bits you'll just *hate*"

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Playing PlayStation longer, harder, deeper.

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"After our first go, we felt sick..."

Not a good start for Unreal Tournament 3... but it got a whole lot better – page 56

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SIDE 2: HOW TO

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Step two
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PS3, PS2 & PSP footage

SIDE A: DVD FOOTAGE All-new footage of all the biggest PS3 games, including *Alone In The Dark*, *The Club* and loads of others – and listen out for our no-holds-barred audio reviews as well.

Ghostbusters
Check out the teaser trailer, then go online and *don't watch the illegal in-game footage on YouTube*. Got it?

Frontlines
THQ's tactical new war FPS disappeared for a while – but now it's back and looking quite promising.

+ Burnout Paradise | **Rock Band** | Dynasty Warriors | **Everyday Shooter** | More

PS3 HD video files

SIDE B: PS3 HD FILES Want to see games in true Hi-Definition? Our HD files – which need to be downloaded to your hard drive (see above) – include *Conflict: Denied Ops*, *GTAIV*, *Haze* and loads more. Don't miss out.

Deus Ex 3
If this is half as good as we hope, it'll be immense. See *another* potentially great FPS in actually-great hi-def.

PS3 Game Saves
To get 100% complete PS3/PSP game saves (we've got loads), copy these files to a memory stick.

+ Dark Sector | **Legendary: The Box** | Turning Point | **NBA Ballers** | More

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PS3 REPORT

How do game developers deal with criticism?

The people behind the games give their views on reviews

Badly. That's the short answer to that question. They're only human, after all – often subject to insane pressures and betrayed by technology. However, nobody likes to be told that something that they've sweated over for three years is, well, frankly a bit rubbish.

The recent refreshingly honest comments by the – now 'resigned' – producer of *Blacksite*: *Area 51* Harvey Smith (snippet: "this project was so f**ked up") got us thinking about how developers must feel when their game receives a mauling. Exactly how do developers react to criticism? What, in their opinion, is the difference between useful, productive criticism and sloppy, uninformed ranting? Does preview and review feedback change the course of a game in progress?

Fred Hasson, CEO of TIGA, the game developer's national trade association, told PSM3 that he believes developers should learn from filmmakers, hone their PR and not rely too heavily on their publishers to inform the public about their products.

"Developers are often guilty of living in a cocoon and not knowing what' s going on in the outside world. They need to be more aware of their audiences," Hasson told us.

Martyn Brown, Development Director at Team 17 Software, is never one to mix his words, telling us: "Historically I've been a bit of a whiner. I find it difficult to accept the opinion of someone who's chucked a few hours at something we as a company have spent probably 10-20 man-years creating."

Fringe benefits

The thing is, rigorous reviews are key to making or breaking a game commercially. Though many devs often question the reviewers' knowledge and integrity.

How you can make games better

Want to share your thoughts direct with developers? They do listen. Matt Grandstaff of *Oblivion* devs Bethesda spends ages checking out their web forums. He says, "From our community, we get tons of great feedback and insights. The mod community is a source of great ideas and we have people on the team found through the mod and fan community." See? Speak to the devs and you could be working *with* them.

Andy Eades, Development Director at Relentless, the studio behind *Buzz*, tells us: "I'd like to think we can take all kinds of criticism. We certainly enjoy positive criticism but I'd be lying if I said negative criticism didn't make me want to explain to the reviewer exactly why they're wrong." We're not really sure 'enjoy' is the correct word there but it's good to see a stiff-upper-lip attitude.

"Finishing a game is often a matter of balancing in favour of what you feel is important and not all critics will agree with your decisions," says Alexandre Parizeau, a producer at Ubisoft's Montreal studio. "Often, reviewers will outline things the team decided not to address because of production constraints."

Still, 'production constraints' (i.e. publishers rushing unfinished games out) or not, a flaw is a flaw and deserves to be

Not listening! Developers find overly critical reviews difficult to take after spending years working on a project

criticised by reviewers. But how does it make the poor developer feel?

"It's hard not to take criticism personally," admits Nour Polloni, producer on Atari's *Alone In The Dark* at Eden Games. "But if you always aim for perfection while bearing in mind there's always things you can do better, then you can deal with it better. When we're deep into the development of a game it becomes hard to be objective, so outside feedback is very important to us."

Which comes full circle to Fred Hasson's remark about devs living in a 'cocoon'. Hasson is certain that if developers work closer with publishers to get the right message out to the right critics about their games, then it can only, ultimately, lead to better games. Which, we guess, is the point of criticism in the first place...

Pub Various | **Dev** Various | **ETA** TBC

Views Everyone's a critic...

Just how do developers respond to criticism?

Andy Eades, Relentless

"With *DJ* and *Buzz*, we realise that some people just don't understand what we're doing. Even on the best review sites, different reviewers have a different feeling about the same game. We look seriously at all comments, whether positive or negative, to see if it resonates with something deeper."

Fred Hasson, TIGA

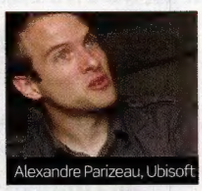
"The way developers should respond is to be more proactive in explaining what they do and placing it in context – it's too late to react once the review is done! If a critic is informed about the background and the concept of the game he's reviewing, it's much harder for him to write an overly critical review."

Nour Polloni, Eden Games

"Feedback from previews and reviews is studied during development and can lead to significant changes. But it depends on the article – there's often no constructive criticism in there at all. We want to make games that lots of people want to play, so listening to criticism and learning from it is essential."

Martyn Brown, Team 17

"I guess developers need to consider a lot of criticism as coming from someone who just doesn't understand how they're made, so it's fair for them to comment on what they see. They're perfectly entitled to that criticism, however cutting and unfair it may be to the people who made it, under whatever conditions."


Alexandre Parizeau, Ubisoft

"My only gripe is that game reviews often read more like a feature list for a product (graphics, sound, gameplay) than an analysis of the experience, like you would see in a movie or book review. But feedback from reviews, as well as forums, is almost always taken into consideration when working on sequels."

ON THE DISC
You'll see all these games on future discs
PS3/Coming Soon

The Opinionator

"Games *have* to be more like *CoD4* than *Okami*..."

We love *Okami*. But it was always going to be a commercial disaster: cel-shaded games are sales poison (like *Fur Fighters*, *XIII* and *Auto Modelista*), while the hero, a painting dog, was never going to lure the mass market. Sales are in no way an indication of a game's quality – in fact, often the opposite – but they do have a wider implication. All games, be they *Need For Speed 65* or *Philosophical Crayon Monster: Redux* cost millions to make, and high-profile 'arthouse' flops like *Okami* only discourage publishers from taking risks.

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Risk is no reward

On the back of a costly flop, publishers often revert to proven genres: FPS's, *GTA* clones and film licences – so the price of creating an innovative or wilfully obscure game is to increase the number of safe, tedious games. Ironic, eh? But there *is* a smarter path to delight gamers and shareholders alike.

Helping hand

The solution lies in *Call Of Duty 4* – a shocking, atmospheric and subversive reinvention of a saturated genre. On one hand, it's safe: an FPS sequel to a multi-million selling franchise. On the other, it's risky, adding a modern day twist, unparalleled online focus and breaking age-old FPS cliches. Did you honestly expect <SPOILERS> the bomb to blow? Or to *play* the dying Sgt Jackson? Or the death of the pilot you'd spent 30 mins saving? <ENDS> Course not – that's why it works: by turning 'rules' on their head. Take *MGS4*: established franchise, 'new' old hero. Snake's fragility is instantly intriguing. The future, in the short term, lies in the clever subversion of 'safe' genres, not wilfully mad, commercially insane new games. **Dan Dawkins**

Myth-Buster

SEEN THIS?

PS3's firmware updates are all rubbish

THE TRUTH

Er, no they aren't. They might not have given us everything we wanted straight away, but Sony *are* listening. For instance, in-game XMB access is being worked on as we speak, and Firmware 2.10 adds DivX movie support – so in addition to Sony's slightly daft proprietary mp4 format, you can now watch .avi and .wmv files as well – which is, er, *bad* <wink> because it allows you to watch downloaded US TV shows, like Heroes Season 2 by er, *lending*, them off the web's file sharing networks. New firmware updates are often met with derision – one of the latest made *Assassin's Creed* crash – but Sony retaliate with a fix almost instantly. Give 'em a chance – they're trying their best to give you what you want. Slowly.

1 Highlander

Your chance to be an immortal.

It's an action-slasher based on the classic 1986 movie. You are an immortal – although not Christopher Lambert – and you'll be travelling across the globe – and even time. You'll visit Pompeii days before the cataclysmic eruption and near-future New York City. There are three sword types to master – claymore, katana and double sword – and they're promising that familiar characters from the hit '80s films will return (Kurgan, please). We hope this is good and not another lame movie cash-in. The surprisingly gorgeous visuals suggest it's got a decent budget behind it at least.

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Widescreen | **ETA** 2008

City hunter The New York scenery looks almost as good as in *GTAIV*, amazingly.

"A most authentic use of a license"
The Bourne Conspiracy page 12

To the death Ancient Rome? Ace. We reckon the invincible immortal has the upper hand in this particular battle.

2 Killzone 2
Multi-player beta trial imminent

The spring release looks unlikely, although rumours suggest the game is nearer to completion than Sony are letting on. Either way, the new screens look great. Vehicle sections are mooted, with ambitious online team battles over huge environments. Good news – Sony will be organising a multi-player beta pretty soon, so keep your eyes peeled. Our guess? March/April – if everyone's not still playing *CoD4*.

Pub Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **ETA** Winter 2008

3 Command and Conquer: Tiberium
FPS meets RTS. Sort of

Based on the *Command & Conquer* series, this squad-based FPS is set in the same universe and combines action with command options – you can fight alongside enormous mech robots and call in air strikes. The last *C&C* FPS on PC was pretty lame, but this one looks much better. The game's been in pre-production for two years and is published by EA, so expect it to be a high-budget action spectacle.

Pub EA | **Dev** EA | **ETA** Autumn

4 Duke Nukem Forever
Badass-ier than ever

This game was first announced almost *11 years* ago, with 3D Realms bosses infamously citing its release date as "when it's ready". As has been the tradition every two years since 1997, a new trailer has been released. And it shows Duke, still sporting his blonde flat-top, absurdo-muscles and radioactive symbol belt, cracking his knuckles and smoking a big cigar. Yep, he's back. But will the game ever see the light of day? Here's hoping, because it's coming out on PS3 this time.

Pub TBC | **Dev** 3D Realms | **ETA** 2008?

C&C, Duke, Raider **We're not entirely sure what to expect from any of these games, quality-wise.**

5 Tomb Raider: Underworld
She's back...

Lara's new adventure takes place in Mexico, but also a mysterious underworld populated by, according to Crystal Dynamics' Eric Lindstrom, "more fantastical creatures". Does this mean we'll be battling monsters? We hope not – all we really want to do is jump around in ancient tombs and murder endangered animals – And the odd bloke as well – with our guns Please don't do an *Angel Of Darkness* again, Eidos...

Pub Eidos | **Dev** Crystal Dynamics

ETA 2008

ON THE DISC
Get CoD4 game saves on this month's disc

Why we love...

Grant Collier

The brains behind the best of the *Call Of Duty* series

What has he done?

In the early days of his career, Grant would hop between companies, working as a designer on PC games, including legendary puzzler *Myst* – one of the best-selling games of all time – and *Postal*, a controversial action game that spawned a terrible Uwe Boll movie. He also worked on the lesser-known *Baldies* and, er, *Mutant Penguins*.

Why do we like him?

Because, after working on the *Medal Of Honor* series and deciding he could do it better, he formed his own company – Infinity Ward – and created the *Call Of Duty* series. *COD* soon became the war FPS of choice, with *COD4* being one of our highest-scoring games of all time. He can also be quite outspoken in interviews, and isn't afraid to speak his mind. In a one-on-one with PSM3 he told us that Sony was a 'hydra' and that they never helped with the production of *COD4* – Infinity Ward had to go to them.

What's he doing now?

Not working on *Call Of Duty 5*, that's for sure. The licence is back in the hands of Treyarch, developers of *COD3*. But Infinity Ward are working on a new project for next-gen consoles. It's top-secret, but we can pretty much guarantee now that it'll be awesome. Will it beat the near-perfect *COD4*, though? We'll have to wait and see.

Who are you?
Name Grant Collier
Role Director
Key Games *Call Of Duty, Call Of Duty 2, Call Of Duty 4: Modern Warfare*

The Insider

He's the man who knows too much...

Last month, we reported that Infinity Ward – of **Call Of Duty 4** fame – are working on a new sci-fi themed shooter, due 2009, but latest rumours suggest that they'll be working on Activision Blizzard's **Bond** franchise, to co-incide with the release of the new Daniel Craig movie, rumoured to be called simply *007*. It sounds plausible – the timing's spot on, plus they'll relish the opportunity to surpass Free Radical's N64 classic **GoldenEye** as the best Bond game ever. Other sources imply there'll be two Bond games – one driving, one shooting. Infinity Ward have passed the *COD5* torch back to Treyarch, with the game set to return to – boo – WWII with a pacific rim setting. Ubisoft are rumoured to be working on a staggering *nine* all-new games lined up over the next few years – plus returning classics like **Prince of Persia 4**. We'll have more details on these soon.

"There's talk of Infinity Ward getting involved in *Bond*"

Eidos' recently-revealed **Tomb Raider: Underworld** (see p11) looks more lavish than ever, but our sources suggest the gameplay is almost identical to *Anniversary* – but in fairness, Eidos have only shown one level so far, so there's plenty of scope for surprises. Word reaches us that the much-vaunted **Unreal** engine – a middleware graphics tool available to all developers to make games 'easier' to make – has suffered initial teething problems. A source tells us that it can't handle smoke effects – at least, in its first iteration – and this led to problems for certain developers, including EA, who had to rewite chunks of code just to make **MoH Airborne** work properly – hence the delay. Still, as **Unreal 3** proves (p56), it's a powerful piece of software.

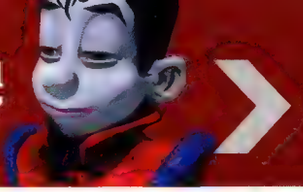
Codemasters are shunning these tools to adapt their Neon Engine – as seen in **Colin McRae DiRT**. This approach will pay long-term dividends and lets them take full advantage of PS3's Cell processor. Keep an eye on the promising **Race Driver: GRID** later in 2008.

Remember when it was claimed that the DualShock 3 rumble pad would be more advanced than PS2's DualShock 2? Turns out, it's total nonsense. A trusted source (and expert in pad design) tells us the technology is identical – in fact, Sony are actually using cheaper, more streamlined components than before. There's also talk of Immersion already having a superior version to the one present in the DualShock pads, allowing more delicate rumble from different areas of the pad, but Sony, Microsoft or Nintendo really aren't prepared to stump up the extra cash for the privilege of it.

Finally, the good news is that **Sega** are bringing a host of all-new games to PS3 this year including a horror game from Silicon Knights – the folk behind *Too Human* on 360. And a very popular Sega franchise will *finally* make its PS3 debut soon. There'll be more next month...

The Bond age Will *COD4* devs Infinity Ward have a hand in the next Bond game? We hope so.

"'Oh no' was our initial reaction to PS3 *Larry*"
Leisure Suit Larry page 14



PS3 REPORT

Bourne to be wild on PS3

Unseen driving missions revealed – first hands-on

Well, we'd guessed over six months ago – after the developers claimed there'd be 'shock new features' back at E3 – but we recently went hands-on with the 'secret' driving sections in *The Bourne Conspiracy*. We were thrust into a Mini and asked to evade the fuzz, in a recreation of the Paris chase from the first film, The Bourne Identity. Although tense and exciting, the driving bits are a little wonky at the moment, with the car handling like it's on ice. But we're sure that will be tweaked before release.

The core game's strong – one of the most authentic uses of a licence we've seen. Much of this is down to an exciting camera system. It's similar to Xbox 360's *Gears Of War* shaky-cam, and gives the impression that a handheld camera is filming every move.

The fighting's tense and improvisational, from chucking potted plants to cracking a sniper's bonce against a statue. Full hands-on report next issue.

Bourne's fighting looks top-class

"Thrust into a Mini and asked to escape the fuzz"

ON THE DISC
We can't wait to bring you some odd Larry action

PS3 ONLINE

Vote in the PSM3 awards

Vote for the games of 2007 – and win big

By popular demand, we're extending the voting for the PSM3 2007 Awards – giving you another chance to nominate your games of the year, and win up to £400 worth of top PS3 games. Simply head to www.psm3mag.com now for full category details, and a chance to vote for your favourites. Think *CoD4's* not getting the credit it deserves? Angered by our deplorably low *FIFA 08* score? Or just want to show your love for the criminally underrated, er, *Heavenly Sword*? With categories spanning Best Game, Best Publisher, Unsung Hero and Defining Moment to name but a few, it's time to get voting. And a randomly selected entrant will scoop ALL the award-winning games. What are you waiting for? Get your opinions heard online today.

Action Jackson Was there a more touching moment than Sgt Jackson's explosive demise in *CoD4*? We say no.

Clank's a lot Could *Uncharted* make a late bid for best game of 2007? It's certainly the best looking.

Stick man challenge

Can you guess what game this is?

No challenge last month, but the one a few issues before that was... *TimeSplitters 3: Future Perfect*. It featured Cortez meeting himself through a time portal. See? Easy. Now, here's this month's. Can you guess what it is? The clue is... oh, frankly, if you need a clue to get this one, you need more help than we could possibly provide.

PS3 REPORT

The new face of Leisure Suit Larry

And, well, he's not quite how we expected...

"Oh no!" was our initial reaction to *Larry* on PS3. While most slated the last PS2 game, *Magna Cum Laude*, we loved its tongue-in-cheek nature, rapid-fire scripting, colour and, er, bum jokes. But above all, we adored the lead character Larry Lovage – nephew of Larry Laffer from the old PC games, who's now owner of the movie studio where the PS3 game is set – due to his self-deprecating wit, optimism and, well, giant smiling head. And, sadly, the new 'edgier' Larrry (above) isn't half as lovable. Bah.

This new game, developed by *Worms* creators Team 17 (eh?), has an altogether darker visual style. Our hero looks like a gormless, droopy-

"Feels like a demo for a game that's years away"
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed page 16

"The new 'edgier' Larry isn't half as lovable. Bah"

eyed youth and not even halfway reminiscent of his former self. But the good news is that it'll feature all of the things that made us fall in love with the series; puzzles, ridiculous minigames and, of course, crude innuendo and, erm, pendulous *me-lons*.

The game features celebrity voice 'talent' including Carmen Electra, Shannon Elizabeth, Dave Atell (a hilarious American comedian) and Jay Mohr (Bob Sugar in Jerry Maguire). We're happy Larry's back, but slightly confused by his new look. Let's hope the game's as as sharp, funny and detailed as *Magna Cum Laude*.

Pub Activision | **Dev** Team 17 | **ETA** 2008

Features

What can we expect from Larry on PS3?

On the bright side, it looks like more of a *game*...

Dream sequences

The game will feature dream sequences that see Larry playing the lead role in movies. Dirty movies no doubt. The shot above is from the Wild West level where he apparently plays a "love gun for hire". Expect willy jokes. Lots of them.

Bigger levels

According to the press blurb, you'll be able to wander around Larry's world freely, from his uncle's movie lot to... well, we don't know where else, but we're hoping for a joke-packed city environment like in the last game.

Platforming bits

Apparently there'll be platforming bits in this new Larry, something *Magna Cum Laude* didn't feature at all. Does this mean it'll be less of a traditional adventure game and something more action-orientated? Probaby.

More minigames

The last Larry was essentially all minigames - some quite fun, some totally pump – that you'd only put up with to see the next bum joke or cut-scene. Here's Larry playing some kind of deck game aboard the – snort – 'Bitanic'.

Er... sniping?

We're not sure how this works, but Larry has a 'love gun' – fnar – which we presume will turn innocent, prim, library worker types into raging porno vixens. The field is full of men, too, so expect 'comedy' results for a misplaced shot.

ON THE DISC
All these games will appear on future discs

The last minute shots of big importance

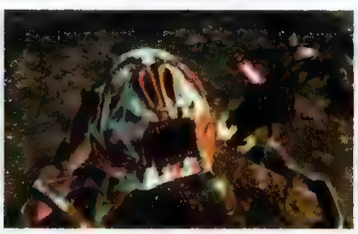
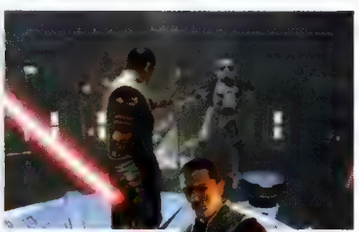
The freshest pics, squeezed in as we go to press

PS3 Lost Planet 360 'exclusive' comes in from the cold

Details **Pub** Capcom | **Dev** In-house | **Genre** Action

Lowdown We've finished it on Xbox 360, and still can't explain the plot – in short, Capcom's third-person shooter is Starship Troopers in the Antarctic. You play as biologically-enhanced soldier, er, Wayne battling insect-like aliens called the Akrid while braving the sub-zero conditions. The enhanced PS3 version includes 16 multi-player maps and a set of new characters – including Frank West from Xbox 360's zombie-battling classic *Dead Rising*. Review next issue.

ETA March

PS3 Star Wars: The Force Unleashed ...Or SW: Tech Demo

Details **Pub** Activision | **Dev** Lucas Arts | **Genre** Action

Lowdown We've seen the game in action, but it's not living up to its potential. Yet. The *God Of War*-style QTE boss-battles are OK, pulling an X-Wing out of the sky with the Force is impressive, and tearing up foes with lightsaber flurries is fun, but right now it feels like a demo for a game that's years away. It's beautiful looking but we're dubious of how varied it'll be, since all the devs talked about was 'kicking-ass' over and over again.

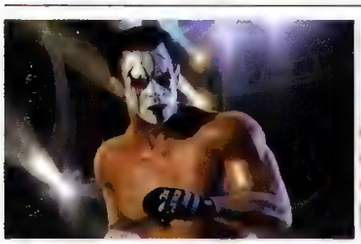
ETA Summer

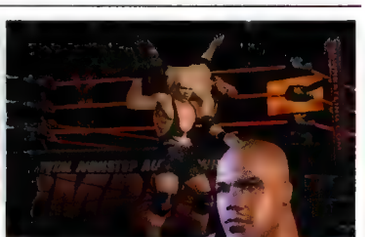
PS3 Yakuza 3 Now with added mental minigames

Details **Pub** Sega | **Dev** In-house | **Genre** Action

Lowdown The original sold terribly and the sequel didn't even get a UK release, but expect *Yakuza 3* to shine on PS3. Set 400 years in the past, you play as Kazumanosuke Kiryu, a hitman with a shady past. Taking on wet work for cash, you'll be smashing up 'marks' with four different fighting styles and loads of different Samurai weapons. The minigames range from archery, tortoise racing and wooing the sexy ladies, to playing as a rat and avoiding being eaten by a snake. Madness.

ETA March 2008



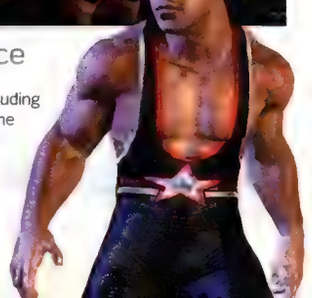


PS3 TNA iMPACT Fake-slapping *Smackdown* across the face

Details **Pub** Midway | **Dev** Midway | **Genre** Beat-'em-up

Lowdown *Total Non-stop Action* (or *TNA*) is the relatively new American 'sport' featuring ex-WWE stars including Kurt Angle and Booker T and a hexagonal ring. Blokes get drop-kicked over the ropes and pile-drived into the canvas, but the ultimate test will be to see if their game feels meatier and more precise than *Smackdown* – as the wrestling stalwart's combat is flimsier and less satisfying than ever. More soon.

ETA 2008



The Optimist

Don't worry. Be happy

If the internet hates it, it must be rubbish!

You know, when you're on the internet, there's just no point in having an opinion. If the collective web-brain thinks something's a load of old bums, it *is*. It's like the PS3 version of *The Orange Box*; the moment the news broke that it had a slightly lower frame-rate than the PC and Xbox 360 editions, it was instantly labelled as inferior.

And no matter how many articles were written to the contrary by numerous credible sources, they didn't matter; the internet had decided, unequivocally, that it was crap. Whenever someone pipes up in the comments field of a website or on a forum, with an opinion contrary to what the heaving data mass of the web thinks, they're done for. The idiots.

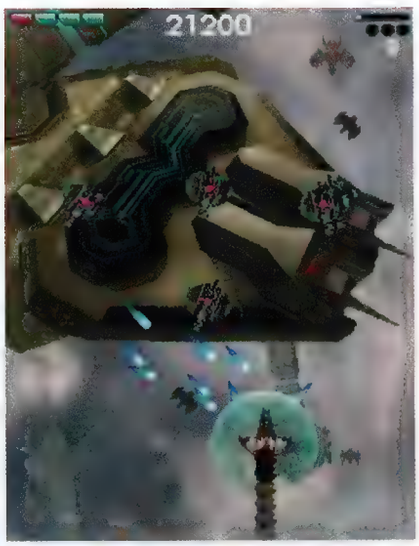
Caught in the net

And rightly so. Evidence? Pah! It's the internet. Nothing matters. If something's rubbish, it's rubbish forever with no hope of redemption. If you want to be part of the internet, leave your logic and your reasoning at the door, and add a load of random numbers to the end of your name. You won't fit in otherwise, and we'll all call you names, and say that you're crap at games, and that you're fat, and that your mother done terrible things with a man who is not her husband. Because that's the internet's way, and it's how it will and should always be. Lolcats! FTW! OMFGBBQ! etc.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Net fanboys – send your vitriol in response to psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Nokia N81 does it all Music, movies, games...

The new Nokia N81 could be the only media device you'll need

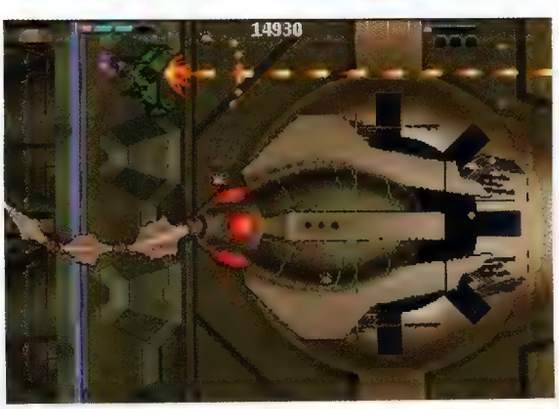


These days, your mobile device isn't just for communicationing. It's an extension of your personality, a fashion statement and, with the Nokia N81, the next episode in mobile entertainment. 8Gb of internal flash memory provides room for 6000 songs, hundreds of movie clips and even feature-length films in the palm of your hand.

Nokia's N-Gage platform heralds a new gaming horizon for mobile fraggers. With a powerful graphics processor under the hood and instant access to dozens of leading titles, the N81 is as much about gaming as it is music and movies. Dedicated gaming keys morph this mobile into a fully-fledged entertainment gadget, while any game can be tried out before downloading – all on the fly. In true 21st century style, join the online N-Gage community to compare, connect and compete with friends across the globe.

But it doesn't stop there. The N81 and accompanying software works just like your MP3 player; synchronising with Windows Media Player, ripping audio CDs straight to your pocket and controlling playback with sleek buttons and an innovative scroll wheel. Just plug in your headphones or connect a compatible Bluetooth speaker for a quick ticket to audio nirvana.

Bored of your current playlist? Jump onto the brand new Nokia Music Store to discover, preview and download new music straight to the N81. Artists, albums and genres can be browsed on the move while favourite tunes can be added to a wish list and bought at a later date. What's more, anything bought via a PC using the Nokia Music Store will be automatically synched to the N81. It's like having a back catalogue on your back pocket.



- **Download new music from the Nokia Music Store...**
- **8Gb flash memory for 6000 music files**
- **Relieve train boredom with video player**
- **Find files fast with the innovative scroll wheel**
- **Compete with friends via multiplayer N-Gage gaming**
- **Try every new game before buying**

The 2.4in QVGA screen delivers a pin-sharp 320 x 240 pixel resolution and 16.7 million colours that add an extra edge of realism to photos and movies. Take on-the-spot snaps with the integrated 2mp camera and share or print via e-mail, Bluetooth and MMS using Nokia's XpressShare and XpressPrint technology.

And don't think all this wizardry means a compromise in size - the N81 measures just 10cm tall and less than 2cm deep.

In short, the N81 is a pocket rocket for today's multimedia heroes.

For more information on Nokia Nseries products and services visit: www.nokia.co.uk/play

PS3

Pub Capcom | **Dev** Capcom
Price £50 | **Release** February 15
Multi-player None

ON THE DISC
We'll review *DMC4* on next issue's disc.

Devil May Cry 4

Hard, insane, and *totally* convinced it's right – has *DMC* lost it?

KNOW IT NOW

- Gratuitous cleavage shots? ✗
- Labyrinthine combos? ✓
- Five different fighting styles to master? ✓
- A sensible, easy-to-follow storyline? ✗

Devil May Cry 4 doesn't care about you. It doesn't even particularly *like* you. If it was your girlfriend, it'd stay out all night and never call, drink gin and dye its hair pink, invite you to see its band and then flirt with other boys right in front of you. It's going to do whatever it likes, and it isn't bothered what you think of it. But you've got to admit, sometimes that's sort of hot.

Tough as old boots

Here's the thing: if you go into *DMC4* with expectations about fairness, checkpoints, structure and rewards that you've got from *God Of War*, you're going to end up all hurt and confused. Most games these days tend to hold your hand all the way through, never making you play the nasty bits more than once and usually making sure you've got enough health to have a fighting chance at any boss. *Devil May Cry* is *not* like that. It'll throw a million demons at you because it wants to, put in half a dozen arbitrary fights in a 30-foot stretch of map, force you to survive for ages on a tiny sliver of health... and then give you a D at the end of the level because you weren't doing enough combos. Insecure types should look elsewhere.

The obvious example is Nero. After three instalments, Dante's been relegated to supporting character – at least for the game's first half – by a kid who looks like his younger self but cries a lot more. Nero might seem identical at first, but he actually plays

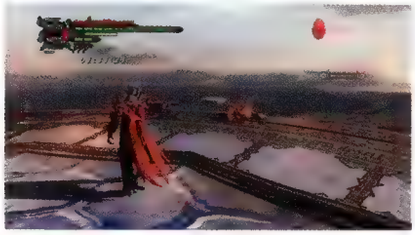
Hand of god Devil hand uses #102: giving boss Berial an almighty punch up the arse.

PSM3
BUY IT
"Most games give you a fighting chance. DMC4 is not like that"

Scale away Unsurprisingly, you beat snake-lady by devil-grabbing her glowing froo-froo and slicing it to ribbons.

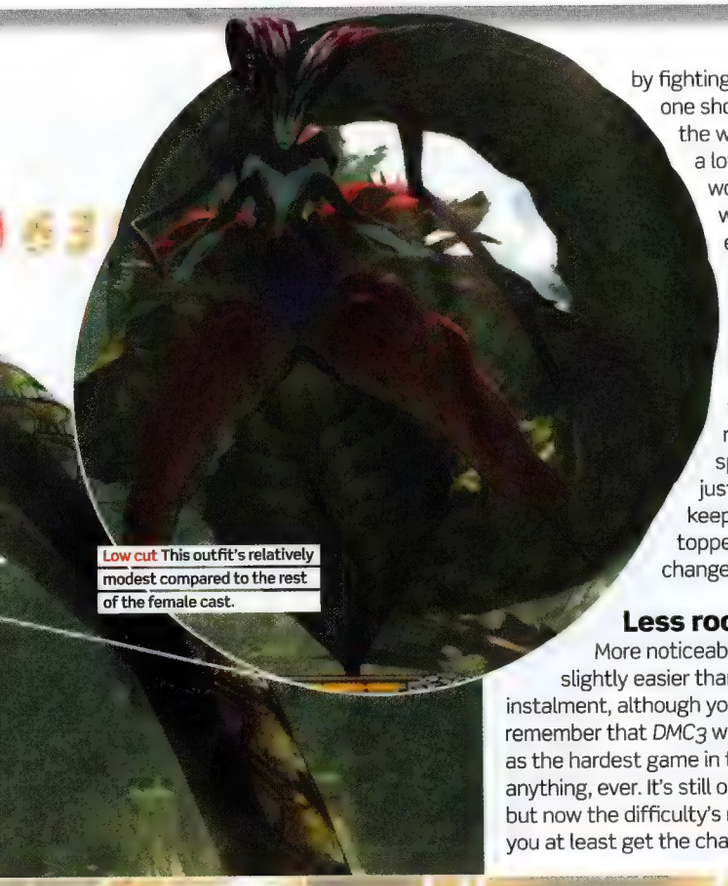
"Nero's demon arm means, for the first time, *DMC* has throws"

with slight differences: he can pull off big aerial combos, for instance, and his charged shot knocks enemies off their feet. Most importantly, he's got a massive demon arm that means that, for the first time, the *DMC* series has throws in it: up close he can slam monsters into the ground, or at range he can yank them in or set up an air combo. These are all moves you'll be able to do fairly easily, but he's also got a handle on his sword that lets him rev it up like a motorbike – and this is the part where *DMC4* stops caring what you think. See, at first, it seems useless: revving the sword takes a couple of seconds of holding down L2, only works for one slice and seems to ruin any combo you're in the middle of. But then it turns out you're *doing it wrong* – eventually you realise that if you hit the button about halfway through the first sword-slash of your basic combo, you'll rev up your sword instantly. And *then* you realise that every sword attack has a rev-window like this – although they're often much harder to find and hit – so in theory, you can go slash-rev-special-rev-special-rev-special-forever. You don't need to do this at all – we completed Nero's section on a first playthrough and barely scraped the system's surface – but it's a perfect example of how *DMC4* encourages autistic obsessiveness with beautiful combos. By comparison, the mighty *God Of War* lets you get away with murder.



Sparda the matter Dante's Devil Trigger makes him shoot faster, turning him into a clone of his dad Sparda.

And OK, *DMC*'s tried to change. One of the biggest complaints about part three was that you never really knew whether the dozens of moves and styles on offer were useful or not until you bought or upgraded them, and by that time it was too late. That's been dealt with: now you can sell abilities back for the same price you paid, so you can road-test different styles, shift things around and see what works. Even better, now you use different currencies for buying different things. Red Orbs are used for health – as usual – but you buy abilities with Proud Souls, earned



Low cut This outfit's relatively modest compared to the rest of the female cast.

by fighting well... or, in *DMC*'s one show of sympathy for the weak, when you die a lot. That means no worrying about whether you'll have enough health to take on the boss if you buy that saucy new combo you've had your eye on, and no fretting that you're missing out on a spectacular move just for the sake of keeping your health topped up. It's a simple change, but important.

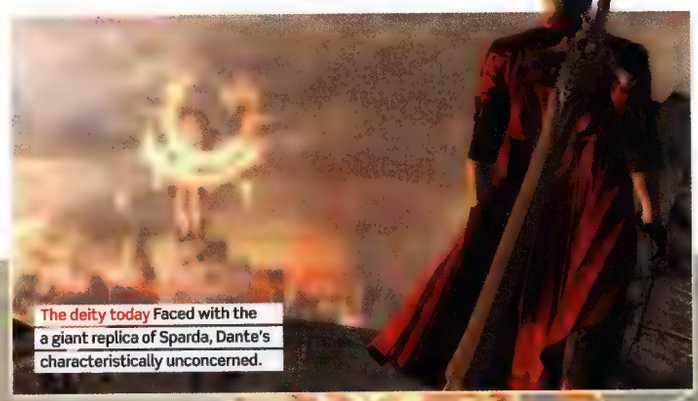
Less rock hard

More noticeable is that it's slightly easier than the last instalment, although you've got to remember that *DMC3* was widely regarded as the hardest game in the history of anything, ever. It's still outrageously tough, but now the difficulty's more of a curve: you at least get the chance to get to grips with the fighting system before the bad guys really start going for it. Boss battles take ages, but you don't have to fight through an entire level to get to them. It's easier. Just.

Sometimes, though, you get the impression that *DMC4* doesn't really like being this nice, and thinks you're a girl for expecting fair treatment. At the start of the game, you're presented with a choice of difficulty levels that subtly nudge you towards the harder Devil Hunter option by asking if you've played the game before (we said yes, because we're IDIOTS), but that's really just producer Kobayashi-san's way of warning you what you're letting yourself in for. If you go into a boss fight and use one of your health packs (*DMC* calls them Vital Stars) but lose, that Vital Star's

She's a Lady

Lady returns, but – slightly upsettingly – she's ditched the cute indie chick look in favour of a plummeting neckline that makes her look like she was designed one-handed. Sigh.



The deity today Faced with the a giant replica of Sparda, Dante's characteristically unconcerned.

Against all gods The battle with the monolith's very reminiscent of the Colossus scrap from *God Of War*, only not quite as exciting.

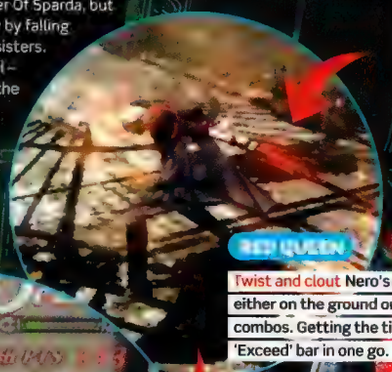
Nero vs Dante

Who's the best?

Ageing demon hunter or cocky youngster?

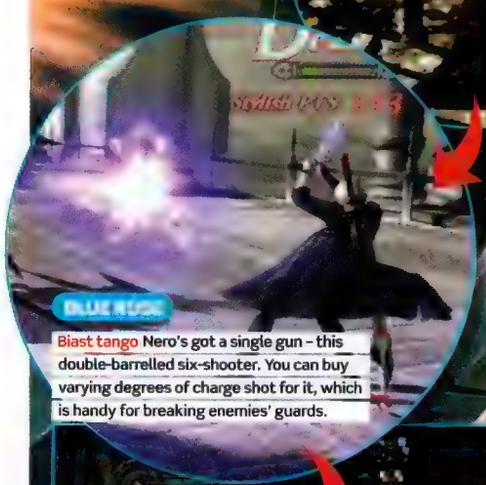
NERO

Nero's your classic anime archetype – broody, fresh-faced and overconfident, but prone to crying when things don't go his way. He's part of the Order Of Sparda, but he's complicated things slightly by falling in love with one of the leaders' sisters. He gets all the games emotional – read 'tedious' – moments. He's the rapier of the game's two characters, coming with an air combo as standard, but able to do huge damage with his [illegible] sword. He probably [illegible].



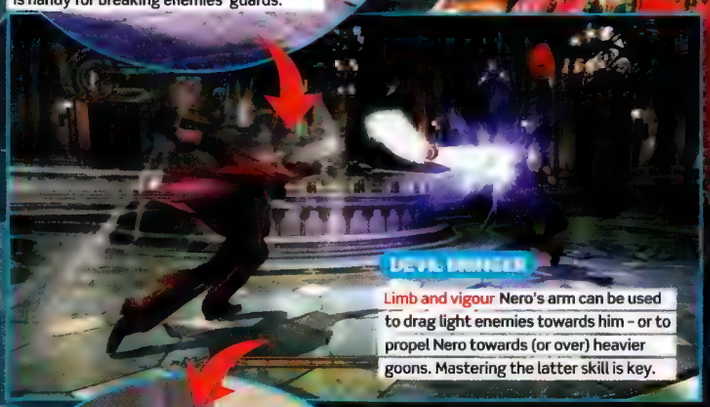
RED QUEEN

Twist and clout Nero's sword can be 'revved' either on the ground or in the middle of combos. Getting the timing right fills his 'Exceed' bar in one go.



BLUE ROSE

Biast tango Nero's got a single gun – this double-barrelled six-shooter. You can buy varying degrees of charge shot for it, which is handy for breaking enemies' guards.

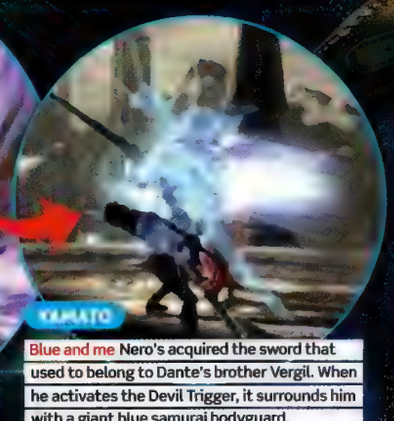


DEVIL BRINGER

Limb and vigour Nero's arm can be used to drag light enemies towards him – or to propel Nero towards (or over) heavier goons. Mastering the latter skill is key.

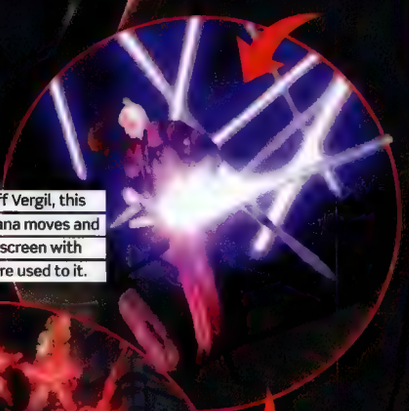
DEVIL GRIP

Bring it on If Dante uses the Devil Bringer up close, he's got a variety of throws – including spearing knight-demons through the lungs or suplexing them onto their helmets.



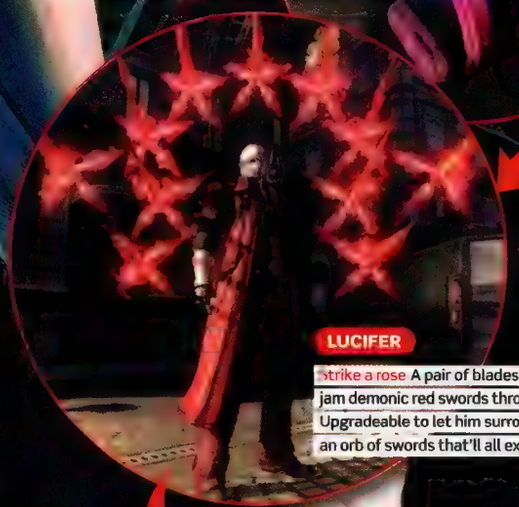
YAMATO

Blue and me Nero's acquired the sword that used to belong to Dante's brother Vergil. When he activates the Devil Trigger, it surrounds him with a giant blue samurai bodyguard.



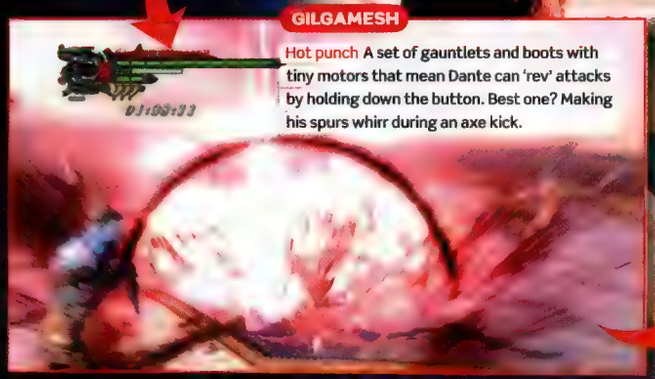
DARK SLAYER

Slicing on the cake Borrowed off Vergil, this new style uses quick-draw katana moves and features a special that fills the screen with sword-slashes. Great once you're used to it.



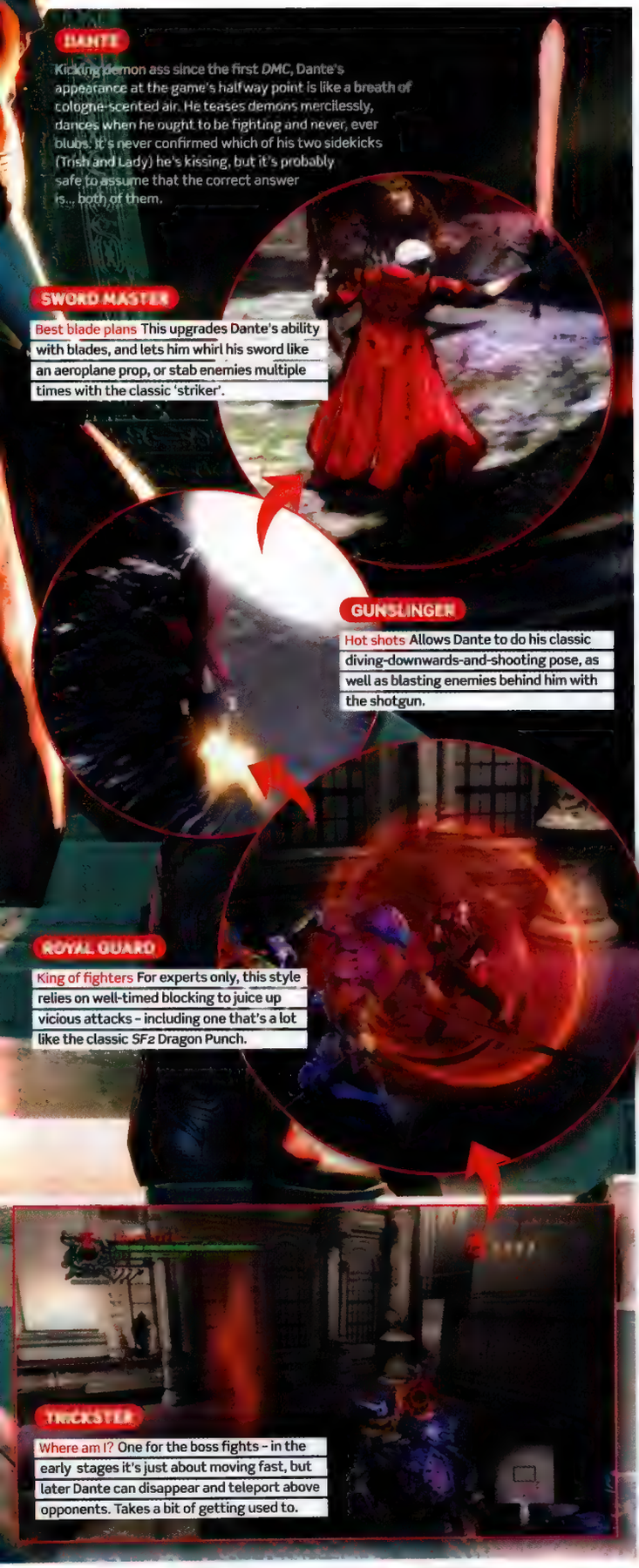
LUCIFER

Strike a rose A pair of blades that let Dante jam demonic red swords through opponents. Upgradeable to let him surround himself with an orb of swords that'll all explode at once.



GILGAMESH

Hot punch A set of gauntlets and boots with tiny motors that mean Dante can 'rev' attacks by holding down the button. Best one? Making his spurs whirr during an axe kick.



DANTE

Kicking demon ass since the first *DMC*, Dante's appearance at the game's halfway point is like a breath of cologne-scented air. He teases demons mercilessly, dances when he ought to be fighting and never, ever blubs. It's never confirmed which of his two sidekicks (Trish and Lady) he's kissing, but it's probably safe to assume that the correct answer is... both of them.

SWORD MASTER

Best blade plans This upgrades Dante's ability with blades, and lets him whirl his sword like an aeroplane prop, or stab enemies multiple times with the classic 'striker'.

GUNSLINGER

Hot shots Allows Dante to do his classic diving-downwards-and-shooting pose, as well as blasting enemies behind him with the shotgun.

ROYAL GUARD

King of fighters For experts only, this style relies on well-timed blocking to juice up vicious attacks – including one that's a lot like the classic *SF2* Dragon Punch.

TRICKSTER

Where am I? One for the boss fights – in the early stages it's just about moving fast, but later Dante can disappear and teleport above opponents. Takes a bit of getting used to.

Shield of dreams This angelic knight's an arse to fight, because he blocks constantly.

Bootiful Nero's best throw ends with this vicious dropkick to the face. Brutal.

gone for good. So is any health you've uncovered by smashing chunks of the environment. So if you're going to use those stars (or smash the health jars, which you usually do by accident in boss fights), you'd better win, because they aren't going to be there to help you next time. Your red orbs will be gone too. Don't like it? Then piss off back to the Mission screen and start the whole level again. The pacing really is all over the place – sometimes you'll have five brutal fights within yards of each other, other times it'll suddenly whack in an brick wall of a puzzle. It carries on the tradition of insane, never-explained environments – there's one bit where you have to traverse a load of disappearing platforms, except that they're swarmed by irritating cloud-beast monsters and if you fall off you drop into a pit full of monsters. Mess the whole thing up, and it's back to the checkpoint at the start of the level. Gnngh.

Doing it all again

Weirdest of all, the difficulty curve seems to peak in the middle of the game, around mission ten, when you get Dante, a whole load of upgrade orbs and carte blanche to mess monsters up. Almost unforgivably, this is the point where *Devil May Cry 4* makes you play nearly all of the game again – including four boss fights identical to the ones you've already done – except with some ridiculous constraints about how one level's collapsing and another's filling with poisonous gas. You could almost see it as a little reward, or a super-arch comment on how much harder Dante is than Nero – but really it's shockingly lazy. It's sort of a staple of Japanese games – remember the bit when *Metal Gear* makes you go back for the sniper rifle? – but if it had happened in *God Of War*, we'd have lynched David Jaffe.

It's worth it, though, because there are little chunks of genius slipped in amongst the crazy. Hidden among the stupid fights in lifts and timed bits and slow-down-time bits that are *exactly* like *God Of War*'s, there are parts that'll match anything you've seen in a game before. The cut-scenes are almost as good as *DMC3*'s, with the sort of ridiculous visual flair that only really works in videogames. The Style system returns, and the unforgiving grading really does

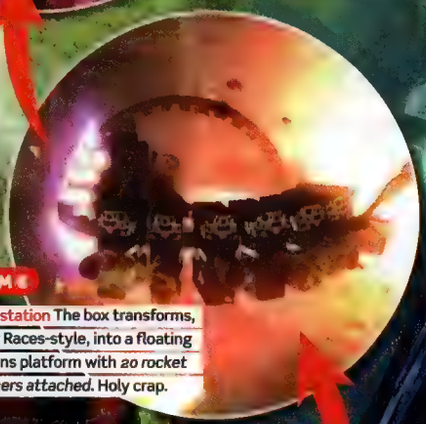
Case Study

Why Pandora's box kicks ass

Dante bags the best weapon to appear in *DMC4* – the Pandora. Its description suggests it can take on 666 forms, but these are the seven to worry about...

FORM 7

Suitcase Glowing like the case from Pulp Fiction, the box itself opens with – we're quoting – "the evil of a broken taboo", destroying anything on-screen.



FORM 6

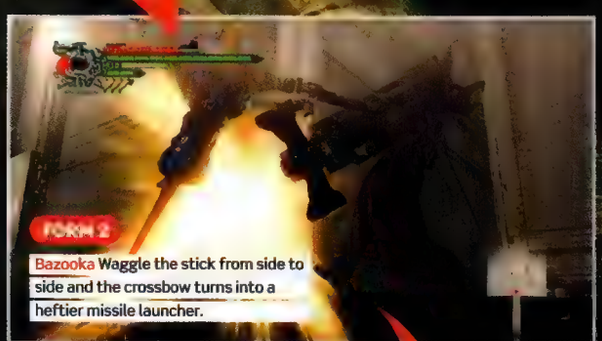
Space station The box transforms, Wacky Races-style, into a floating weapons platform with *20 rocket launchers attached*. Holy crap.

FORM 1

Crossbow The box's standard state is an explosive bolt-firing crossbow. Hits with this build up power for the later forms.

FORM 5

Laser Cannon Twirl the stick around twice and the bazooka turns into a gigantic laser gun.



FORM 2

Bazooka Waggle the stick from side to side and the crossbow turns into a heftier missile launcher.

FORM 3

Gatling Gun Jump and fire with the box and it turns into your standard spinny minigun.

FORM 4

Frisbee Pull back on the stick and the box turns into a shiny metal boomerang – OK, glaive – which automatically homes in on quivering lumps of enemy meat.

Feisty devils The first fight with Dante's a tutorial - the second is the hardest thing in the entire game.

Finger puppets Both demons now have taunt moves - activated by pressing .

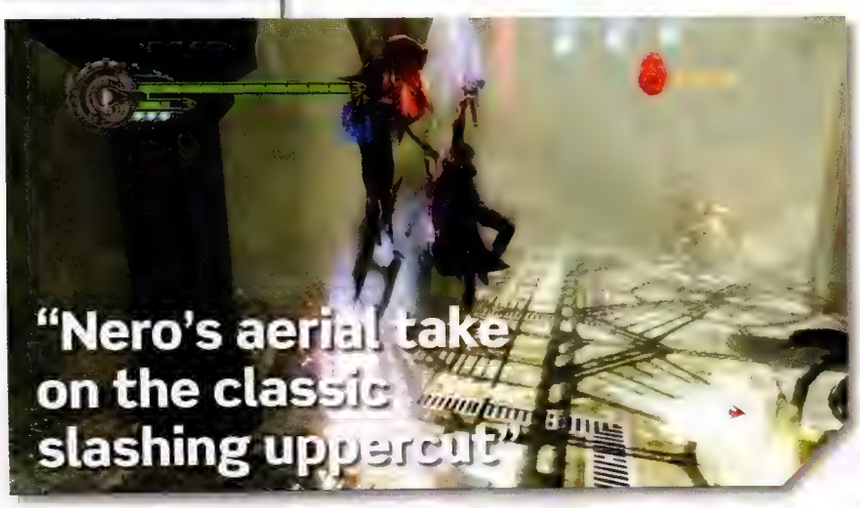
encourage you to go back when you're tooled up and take it to the minor enemies in search of that elusive A/S rank. Some of the boss fights get so frantic, with so much happening so fast, that by the time they're over you'll feel like the king of games. And there are bits – like the moment when you're furious after fighting the Hardest Boss In The World and *DMC4* lets you blow off steam with another fight that's basically punching an old man in the mouth – where it genuinely seems like there's some sort of clever plan. But that isn't true. There's a moment towards the end – after you've fought all the bosses – when *DMC* gets terrifyingly exciting. You can't wait to see what happens next... and then it slams in a two-hour chunk of unrepentant busywork in the *middle of the game's final fight*. It's sort of like talking to a crazy tramp who suddenly says something hidden and profound and you think you've underestimated him and decide he's a philosophical genius... and then he goes back to ranting about the government trying to poison his dog and you realise you're wrong. Sometimes *DMC4* just gets lucky.

There are bits in *DMC4* that you'll absolutely love, and bits that you'll *hate*. There are plot twists that are jaw-on-the-floor stupid and dialogue so bad it almost breaks the entire so-bad-it's-good continuum. There are cut-scenes so full of bongo that you'll *have* to show them to someone else, and chunks of exposition so hefty you'll wander off to make a cup of tea. The game sort of knows what it's doing, but it isn't doing it for you. If you're the autistic sort, you might think it's the best game you've ever played. But *DMC4* just doesn't care either way. **Joel Snape**

Showing off

Don't get too excited about saucy new lady Gloria – she's got a not-too-appealing secret...

Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***Devil May Cry 4* contains...**
The toughest boss in the world | Loads of posing | Incredibly unfair bits

Overall Impossible to recommend to everyone, but the purest expression of the series' style yet.

80

ON THE DISC
We've got loads of 2008's Finest on the disc

200 YEAR THERE

2008 will be the year PS3 finally shows its potential – over the next 20 pages, we'll show you 157 games that'll shape the future...

Grand Theft Auto IV, *Killzone 2*, *LittleBigPlanet* and *Metal Gear 4* are just four big reasons to be excited about 2008. Over the next 20 pages we'll show you another 153, give or take – some you've heard of, some you've not and some that don't officially exist but are *certain* to turn up – that might just be the surprises of the year. *Tiberium*? *Heavy Rain*? Spielberg's EA-published action adventure? All will be revealed over these pages.

New games like VU's free-roaming DNA-meddling *Prototype*, rub shoulders with retro revivals like *Street Fighter 4* – leaving some quarters of PSM3 delirious with excitement. *Fallout 3*, from *Oblivion*-makers Bethesda, looks like a dark horse contender for Game Of The Year, *Brutal Legend* should bring some comic relief to the next generation and *Battlefield: Bad Company* is hoping to redefine environmental destruction. There's Sony's new cars-with-guns franchise, *Eight Days*. Oh, and there's *PES 2009*, *Dark Sector*, *FFXIII*, *White Knight Story*, *Home*, *Lego Indy Jones* and – *please* let it come out this year – *God Of War 3*.

Excited? All being well, 2008 will be the year PS3 finally flourishes and shows its potential. The first steps of a spectacular journey start over the page...

2008 YEAR OF THE PS3

Every game you'll be playing on Sony's next-gen console in the next twelve months revealed...

Fried dice Extraneous details like this really help make for a believable world.

GAME OF THE YEAR?

Grand Theft Auto 4

Who's making it? Rockstar North
When's it coming out? April
What is it? The next generation of *Grand Theft Auto*.
Anticipation? ●●●●●

Tough talk, huge chunks of grit, and the occasional splash of pitch-black humour – that's the *GTA* remit, and the third of Rockstar's trailers for the most anticipated game on PS3 shows the formula's still being blended to perfection. Trailer two showed off the Euphoria ragdoll physics and improved pedestrian AI, but the December trailer – titled 'Move up, ladies' – finally gives us an insight into anti-hero Niko Bellic's character.

Here's what we know: Niko's been lured to Liberty City by his brother Roman's promises of riches and ladies. As it turns out, Roman – the moustache-sporting guy from trailer two – is living in a cockroach-infested flat, but the pair quickly get to work chasing the American dream, doing minor jobs for the mob and chasing girls. Unfortunately, things go wrong and – as explained in the trailer – the boys get jumped, attacked, interrogated and ultimately blamed for the loss of $2 million of their boss's cash, which is where things get nasty. What follows is our first real glimpse of the improved, *Uncharted*-style cover system, which lets you jump behind scenery in gun battles for improved realism. There are also shots of hovercraft action on the city's river, improved truck-crashing physics and a brief taster of the enhanced melee system – Niko even goes for a head-kick at one point in the trailer. The box art – released on November 28 – doesn't reveal much else, but it does confirm that the game will feature sniping... and seems to show one of the game's mission-giving mob bosses – that's the guy with cornrows and shades.

And the trailer's title? Well, it might not mean anything, but with the cast list still tightly under wraps, fevered speculation on the internet has it that the man who delivers the line in the trailer sounds an awful lot like a certain Bobby De Niro. Can there be any truth at all to that? Hopefully we'll be able to ask Rockstar when we're getting our exclusive hands-on look at the game: right here, next issue. Don't miss it.

Grand Theft Auto IV

"Improved cover system which lets you jump behind scenery for greater realism"

New best friend This gang member will most likely be dishing out some missions.

"There's fevered speculation about Bobby De Niro being involved"

TimeSplitters 4

Who's making it? Free Radical Design

When's it coming out? TBA

What is it? Free Rad's return to comedy shooting after the oh-so-serious *Haze*.

Anticipation?

Early teasers – a *Gears Of War* logo doctored to look like a monkey and a version of *Halo*'s master chief with a simian face – point to a '*Splitters* that pokes gentle fun at other games, but other than that Free Rad have been too busy with *Haze* to talk about the the next '*Splitters*. "Ask us again in 2009," they japed, before lapsing into radio silence, leaving us gently tearful.

For what it's worth, we still find '*Splitters* can't-jump, don't-blink combat a refreshing alternative to most FPS game, and this is our hot tip for top multi-player game of whatever year it comes out. Hopefully it *will* make 2008. Stay glued to the monkey diary on Free Rad's website – it's more cheery than Hideo Kojima's blog, for a start.

God Of War 3

Who's making it? Sony

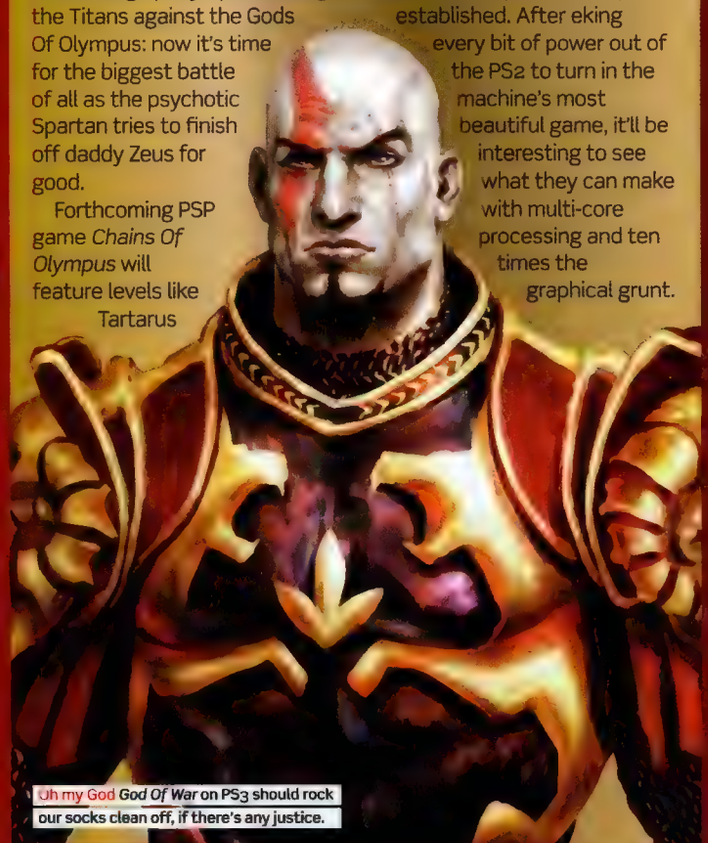
When's it coming out? Late '08

What is it? The final part of the GOW saga, featuring the world's most psychopathic hero.

Anticipation?

Last time we saw Kratos, he was clambering up Olympus leading the Titans against the Gods Of Olympus: now it's time for the biggest battle of all as the psychotic Spartan tries to finish off daddy Zeus for good.

Forthcoming PSP game *Chains Of Olympus* will feature levels like Tartarus and the temple of Helios – nothing's been confirmed about the PS3 version, but heroes like Hercules, Theseus and Achilles have yet to face the former war-gods' wrath. The only minor worry is the depleted team – *GoW2* director Cory Barlog has left – but all they've got to do is follow the template already established. After eking every bit of power out of the PS2 to turn in the machine's most beautiful game, it'll be interesting to see what they can make with multi-core processing and ten times the graphical grunt.



Oh my God *God Of War* on PS3 should rock our socks clean off, if there's any justice.

SNAKE'S ALIVE

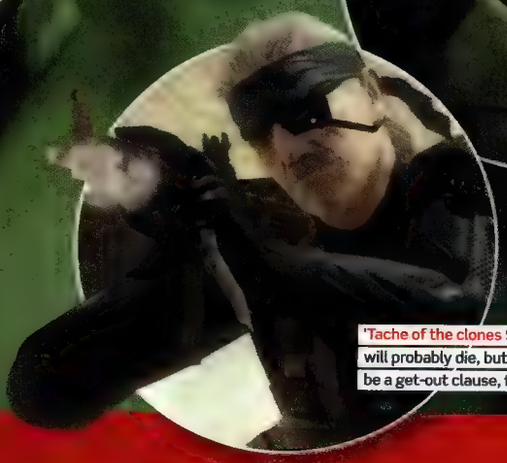
Metal Gear Solid 4

Who's making it? Konami
When's it coming out? April
What is it? Snake and Hideo's last hurrah.
Anticipation?

Every surviving character from the previous *Metal Gears*, four supervillains... and a monkey. That's a cast list that tells you everything you need to know about *MGS4* – it's set to be as silly and smutty as ever, but also tie up all the series' loose ends as Snake gets close to his pension. Meryl, Eva – even Johnny Sasaki, the food-poisoning-prone comedy character from the first couple of *Metal Gear* games makes an appearance.

The old man's got some new tricks, of course. A Psyche meter replaces his Stamina gauge, a wobbly circle known as the 'Baseline map' takes over from the usual radar and improved CQC will let him take on more opponents than before. Most interesting is his tiny robo fledgeling – it'll let him scope out areas ahead of time, but also lets him take control of massive robots, promising an enormous scrap between Liquid and Solid in the rival Metal Gears Rex and Ray. We've yet to see who'll survive the confrontation between Raiden and Vamp – our prediction: neither of them – and it'll be interesting to see how Koj handles the fate of the Beauty And Beast unit. And what will Mr *Metal Gear* do when the party's all over? Our guess: a goth-poetry collaboration with Morrissey. Well, maybe.

Liquid or Solid? Liquid plans to use his PMC army to resurrect Outer Heaven.



'Tache of the clones Snake will probably die, but there'll be a get-out clause, for sure.

Fallout 3

Who's making it? Bethesda Studios
When's it coming out? Late 2008
What is it? An action RPG that's half Mad Max, half Monty Python.
Anticipation?

So what's going on in *Fallout* land? Well, things kick off in Washington DC's nuclear Vault 101, with you staring at a 'father' who looks cleverly similar to the character you've created for yourself. There's not much time for idyllic childhood, though - soon pappy wanders off into the radioactive wasteland and you've got to go after him. Fortunately, you've got a whole pile of guns to help out

Bethesda are using *Oblivion*'s game engine to create a combat system that they describe as a blend of real-time and turn-based combat, but the main thing is that you can target specific mutant body parts and watch them explode in super-slow motion.

Dad - played by Liam Neeson
Curses - it's a nuclear holocaust
Expect a complex attributes system
Fight not just mutants, but super mutants

Rage

Who's making it? Id Software
When's it coming out? TBA
What is it? A Motorstorm/Quake hybrid from John 'Doom' Carmack.
Anticipation?

"You can't spell 'garage' without 'rage'," points out iD creative director Todd Hollenshead. And OK, that's sort of stupid, but it's a decent enough way to point out that this is the *Quake*-makers' most car-centric game yet. PC only *Quake Wars* dabbled with vehicles, but here you've got customizable cars and a whole world to race them around. Rage uses a new engine called iD Tech 5 that lets the developers make levels that are miles across - you'll need your futuristic war-buggy to get across them, but you can hop out whenever you like and have a wander around. *Rage* will also emphasise storytelling - a bit of a first for the *Doom* gang - and, less surprisingly, tons of shooting, as your hero protects innocents in the aftermath of a comet destroying civilisation.

Street Fighter 4

Who's making it? Capcom
When's it coming out? TBA
What is it? Arcade sequel to the best beat-em-up ever
Anticipation?

Ryu or Ken? It's less a preference, than a psychological test – do you side with Ryu (focus, discipline and proof that practice edges innate talent) or Ken (flamboyant, gifted but fallible and more interested in showing off or, say, making sex with girls than practicing fireballs). Either way, Capcom's hotly anticipated 2D scrapper (with 3D backgrounds) could *finally* be the beat-em-up to stop us pining for, er, *SF2*. Set after *SF2*, but before *SF3*, we're promised classic six button play, super and ultra moves, a removal of the fiddly parry system in *SF3*, plus a new Saving/Revenge gauge – a four stage bar that builds as you take damage, allowing unblockable specials and stun attacks. This will *rock*. Fact.

Ryu being served? We love the new 2.5D look - Dhalsim and Chun Li will return too.

Ken you dig it? Expect classic pixel-perfect timing, but the animation is leagues ahead.

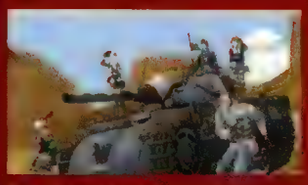
2 Days 2 Vegas
Loveable mobster Vinnie just wants to settle down with his girlfriend, but instead ends up with 48 hours to save his brother's life. Screenshots look unreal, but details are thin.

Ace Combat 6
Japan's favourite dogfighting series returns with a new made-up war, a brace of superweapons (best is the asteroid cannon), online co-op and a custom controller for superfans.

The Agency
It's spy vs loads of spies in Sony's shooting-centric multi-player online game. AI 'operatives' will keep your office going when you're offline, so you get to keep your social life.

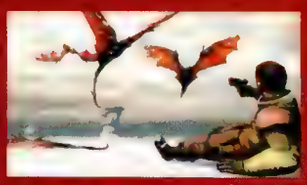
Alive
Survival game? Yes. Cannibalism? No. Instead, you're trying to make it through an earthquake in a drama-driven game Ubisoft are tagging 'action plus'. Aimed at girls, apparently.

Battlefield: Bad Company
Blowing things up is the new cel-shading, and new *Battlefield* promises that you'll be able to explode everything but the frames of buildings and the fillings in your enemies' teeth.



Battle Field Valkyrie: Gallian Chronicles
Sounds quite warlike, but it's difficult to see anything *Full Spectrum Warrior* about this tale of cartoon tanks and love among the spent shells.

Bionic Commando
Capcom's creaky platformer gets a new haircut and swing-physics to rival Spider-Man. Highlight so far? Lobbing whole cars at enemies. We're not entirely sold that this will be amazing, though.



Borderlands
First-person action with vehicle bits? Old hat. The Game 3.0 pitch for this one is customising vehicles and creating maps so that you'll never do the same mission twice. Nice.

Brutal Legend
What do you get if you cross Lemmy, Jack Black and the makers of *Monkey Island* and *Psychonauts*? A Nordic rock-'em-up where you can literally melt men's faces with guitar riffs. Whoowww!

Buzz: Quiz TV
Repeated questions? So over. Now you'll be able to constantly download new 'official' questions, as well as quizzes created by other *Buzz* users. And it'll have wireless controllers, too.

GAMES OF 2008

Not only, but also...

Cipher Complex
Your mission? Find out why a US recon satellite's been blasted from orbit. Your guns? Big. Your name? John Cipher. Yes, seriously. From Edge Of Reality, this might be decent.

Civilization Revolution
Console owners finally get a taste of Sid Meier's famous country-making series, with 18 civilizations to choose from, each with their own despot/plutocrat/benevolent, much-loved leader.

Coded Arms: Assault
Konami's PSP shooter gets a sequel with 16-player online deathmatches. It's gone a bit quiet since E3 2006, but rumours that it's been cancelled are, according to Konami, unfounded.

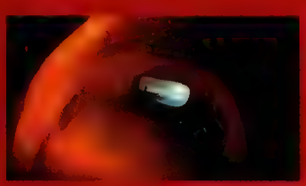
Colin McRae DIRT 2
The flying Scotsman himself might be sadly departed, but Codemasters' drift-happy rally license trundles onwards towards another sequel. Improved dirt physics: likely.

Condemned 2: Bloodshot
Sega's psychological horror sequel is drawing closer. You'll play investigator Ethan Thomas, out to find his missing partner. Online mode promises "brutal hand-to-hand combat".

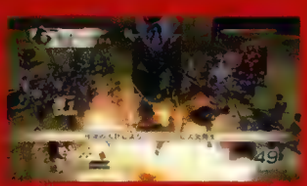
Conflict: Denied Ops
One's a serious sniper – the other's a wisecracking heavy weapons op. It's like the Odd Couple, only with terrorists getting shot instead of arguments about the dusting.

Dark Sector
You can't feel pain and you can grow glaives out of your hand. The obvious career path is battling biological monstrosities with the CIA, and that's what *Dark Sector*'s all about. Icky.

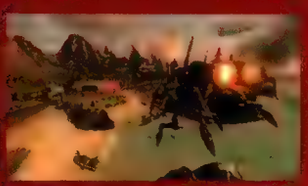
Dead Space
A team of planet-crackers investigate a distress call from a spaceship... and, predictably, it all goes a bit Alien meets The Thing. Not much has been seen of this one yet.



Deus Ex 3
"Who we are is just a stepping stone," announces the teaser trailer, accompanied by what looks like a robo-baby. Don't expect this one for months yet, but it better be good.



Dynasty Warriors 6
More hacking and slashing? Well, yes, but also swimming, climbing, rowing, smashing down walls, wolves and tigers to murder and improved duelling. And slashing, natch.



Enemy Territory: Quake Wars
For people who like their fighting cerebral, Id offer up a class-based game that's all about taking territory. Mismatched teams (it's humans vs Stroggs) make for tactical thinking.

Eternal Sonata
Going under the title *Trusty Bell: Chopin's Dream* in Japan, this one's based around the composer's fantasies of a fairytale world where people with tuberculosis have magical powers. Yeah, really.

FIFA Street 3
EA's next kickabout blends the engine from *NBA Street Homecourt* with the AI from *FIFA 08*. Does that mean it'll actually be good? Let's hope so. Has Peter Crouch on the box. Hmm...

Final Fantasy XIII
FFX-2 director Motomu Toriyama returns for the tale of a girl named Lightning chosen to destroy the monster-infested world of Cocoon. Real-time combat and no random battles? We're in.

Final Fantasy Versus XIII
The second of the three *FFXIII* games – the third is for mobile phones only, ridiculously – Versus is the story of a young king defending the "last crystal in the world" from evil.

THE HEAD HONCHO

What's Next For PS3 ?

The Playstation Store

Sony are understandably keen to stop people downloading content from the 'wrong' territories – but with double the number of demos available in America, free music videos in Australia and freaky curios like horrific 'sound novel' *Imabikisou* coming from Japan, Europe seems to get the short end of the stick. We'd like to see some sort of option to register for international accounts without violating Sony's terms and conditions. We're ambivalent about downloadable cars and guns, but new content is definitely the way forward for lots of games – *SingStar* and *Guitar Hero* are leading the charge, but expect to spend all your spare pennies on *Rock Band* when it arrives early next year.

Make me a man **Avatar creation is just a small part of the big *Home* pie, but will it be tasty?**

The PS Network

Home. That's the basket Sony's got all its eggs in next year, and the success or failure of the *Second Life*-meets-Xbox-live community could be a major factor in the fortunes of PS3. It'll be interesting to see what restrictions Sony put on user-generated content – will you simply be able to report naughty people, a la *SingStar*'s video options, or will creation options stop you from doing anything bad entirely? On a more technical note, it'd also be nice to see the PS3's browser offering better support for Javascript and Flash videos. No, not for anything mucky.

TV times **PlayTV works like a digital freeview recorder box – but might cost £100 or more.**

PS3 Freeview tuner

Sony's PlayTV is set for launch this Spring, and turns your PS3 into a Freeview receiver, and lets you record TV shows to your hard drive.

PSP connectivity

Expect to be able to watch your PS3's video content on your PSP next year. While you're out, obviously. Pointless otherwise.

PS3 Firmware

With updates seemingly out every couple of hours, you might get sick of staring at the install bar but Sony's recent updates have been genuinely useful, with DivX support, PSone remote play on PSP and Themes among many good additions. Things we'd still like to see – access to the XMB without quitting games (including instant messaging like Xbox Live), 'play anything' video software to rival VLC, and better integrated ipod/MP3 playlists with easy access mid-game.

Need a Heroes **Firmware 2.10's DivX support lets you watch all your net vids on your console.**

"We'd like access to XMB without quitting games"

THE GAMES THAT TIME FORGOT

Lost, lonely or just biding their time – they've gone a bit quiet, but we still want to see this lot...

JUST DESERTS

Eight Days

Who's making it? Sony
When's it coming out? TBA
What is it? Desert-based shooter with bodywork-riddling bullet physics
Anticipation? ●●●●●

Sony's driving/shooting hybrid's been off-grid since E3 2006, though occasional blips on the radar suggest it's still in the air and waiting to make a big impact in the coming year. Game music composer Richard Jacques – who also did the tunes for *Pursuit Force* and *Headhunter* – recently let slip that he's still working on the score after making the music for the first trailer, while other sources claim that a second trailer exists, that shows an arms deal gone wrong.

What still isn't clear is how much of the original trailer, showing a shootout and big-rig crash in a truck stop, was real-time, rendered, or even a vague indication of what the gameplay's actually going to be like. Smart money says the whole thing was 'target footage' with HUDs hastily pasted on, although a later tech demo showing a shot-up car at the Games Developers' Conference suggests that London Studios can deliver. In fact, compared to the likes of *Drake's Fortune*, some of the early footage looks easily achievable – although the explosion physics are still the most impressive we've seen anywhere.

And what's it actually about? All we really know is that it takes place over eight days in the Arizona desert, with a showdown between various criminals tearing apart the cacti and roadside diners with 'elements of *Pursuit Force*' and plenty of running around. The trailer shown already was day two: things can only get more insane from there.

Aim high The early footage looks achievable and yet it's still pretty impressive.

Steven Spielberg's Project

"You can expect it to be something that appeals to a broad audience," says Neil Young, head of EA's LA studios, about Steven Spielberg's first go at a videogame. He's contracted for three – in a role credited as 'executive producer' – so we're predicting one child-friendly tale of wonderment, one about the futility of war and one adaptation of The Goonies, maybe.

Red Faction 3

Confirmed to be in development in August 2006, THQ's tale of war on Mars is coming back for another go. The only trouble: dozens of FPS's that offer penetration physics and destructible scenery – notably *Fracture* – scupper its unique selling point a bit. Can it recover? We'll see.

SSX 5

After taking a slight tumble with the less-than-expectedly-stellar SSX *On Tour*, it's almost a certainty that EA's piste-up will be back for another run. This time we'll settle for no less than one enormous mountain with no loading pauses – and huge online racing and showing off opportunities, natch.

Tony Hawk's Project 10

With Tony contracted to Activision for another ten years, they've already confirmed that the Birdman's next game is in production. Early word is that the series will see a *Skate*-style reinvention to help it keep up with EA's more realistic take on skating, although it'll be interesting to see how it's done...

The Getaway 3

Shown in brief as a tech demo in 2006, the next *Getaway* promises the most realistic London yet, as well as the world's shiniest black cabs. Interestingly, we talked to a man from Team Soho who claims it'll offer online deathmatching, although we were in the pub and he asked us not to say anything.

Going Looking dry-eyed and composed here, with just the merest hint of stress.

Going Ooh dear, that's torn it. Heard something perturbing, love?

Gone Turn that frown upside-down, young lady. It'll be the waterworks next.

CRYING OUTSIDE

Heavy Rain

Who's making it? Quantic Studios
When's it coming out? TBA
What is it? Weird emoto-thriller almost certainly packed with crying ladies
Anticipation? ●●●●●

"How far are you prepared to go to save someone you love?" that's the psychodrama-by-numbers question asked by a teaser poster on Quantic Dream's website, along with *Heavy Rain*'s new subtitle, *The Origami Killer*.

The actual content of the game's completely unknown, but with Quantic's track record including serial killer-thriller *Fahrenheit*, it looks like the mostly French crew are on safe ground.

A teaser trailer showing off their – admittedly impressive – facial rendering technology gave away nothing about the plot, save that there appears to be a young woman in it looking increasingly concerned in a realistic way. With our mighty thinking caps on we'd guess it's probably about someone who callously murders people and leaves tiny folded swans behind, lightly moistened with his own salty tears.

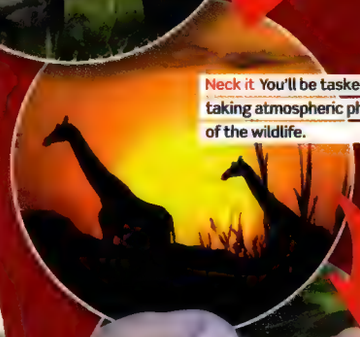
SSX5

"We'll settle for no less than one enormous mountain with no loading pauses"

Tram hammer Indy's fighting the Triads this time – and there'll be Nazis too.

Rag and bones The game's physics are undeniably impressive.

Horny devil Even when this chap gets a bit too close, you can't take pot shots.



Neck it You'll be tasked with taking atmospheric photos of the wildlife.

Muddy waters You'll be zooming in on these guys for nail-biting close-ups.

THE DOCTOR RETURNS

Indiana Jones 2008

Who's making it? Lucasarts
When's it coming out? TBA
What is it? Matinee-style Nazi-knobbler featuring the very latest in ragdoll physics
Anticipation?

Another no-show since E3 2006, it's difficult to know how excited to get about Indy's next adventure. We love the man but fear his games – we're excited about the possibilities of Lucasarts' 'biomechanical rendering engine' Euphoria, but in practice the animations aren't as nice as *Drake's Fortune*. Based on the E3 trailer – which shows Indy bashing Triad goons and promises that Indy's fighting the Nazis again – it seems like this won't be based on Kingdom Of The Crystal Skulls, which sees Indy taking on the Soviet Union. Hopefully the Lego version can keep us going until Lucasarts get their act together.

"It's difficult to know how excited to get about Indy's adventure"

ANIMAL MAGIC

Afrika

Who's making it? Rhino Studios/Sony
When's it coming out? Late 2008
What is it? Giraffe-bothering snap-em-up for the Attenborough-lover in your life
Anticipation?

With 'mainstream' written all over its beautiful, 1080p-furred gazelles and cheetahs, *Afrika* consistently makes the list of 'games we can show to disapproving girlfriends to persuade them that gaming is both educational and, well, kinda pretty' – but it's gone a bit quiet over at the aptly-named Rhino Studios.

The last trailer, shown at the 2007 Tokyo Game Show, confirmed rumours that gameplay will involve taking snaps of animals using human photographers, but we've not been told what else will be on offer. And sadly we're still not sure whether you'll get bonus points for the really good Animal Planet stuff like lions tearing apart wildebeest and hippos inadvertently playing football with their offspring. What's absolutely cast-iron, however, is that there won't be any guns in the game. Not even tranq ones. Even we'd concede that it's probably for the best, that.

A WORLD APART

LittleBigPlanet

Who's making it? Media Molecule
When's it coming out? Mid 2008
What is it? A Lego kit for the Playstation generation, and the cutest game ever
Anticipation?

Is Sack Boy the saviour of PS3? Since the hessian hero made his debut at E3 2007 accompanied by The Go! Team's hyper-cute bubblegum pop, everyone's been desperate to start messing around in *LittleBigPlanet*'s world. Another showing at Gamer's Day introduced specifics – you use the analogue sticks to wave, smile and slap other characters – but it's only as further details start to emerge that the title of Media Molecule's latest starts to seem so appropriate. Simply put: everyone's going to be able to make levels for *LBP*, from your little sister to graphic designers – limited only by their imagination and the tools at their disposal. They'll be able to upload photos from phones or import textures from computers, cobbling them all together into something stupid or brilliant. Once they're uploaded to the PS network, everyone will be able to play them, with eBay-style rankings to show frequently-played or high-rated environments. The only worry is people sneaking bad content into their levels, but Sony are quick to point out that they've already got moderation systems in existence. Will it catch on? Well, web 2.0 trends are difficult to predict – look at the wasteland that used to be Myspace – but there's no reason this shouldn't be enormous. Who can resist that smiley face?

"There's no reason this shouldn't be enormous"

LittleBigPlanet

"Everyone's going to be able to make levels, from your little sister to graphic designers"

Fracture

Make the earth move – no, seriously, literally *move* – in this FPS that's all about causing soil disruptions to reach new areas and shield yourself from gunfire. Nice gimmick.

Free Realms

It's an MMORPG with a difference: one where there's no blood or scariness, in a magical land designed to hoover up microtransaction dollars from the lucrative teen-girl market.

Frontlines: Fuel Of War

It's all about pushing back the borders in this contender to *CoD4*'s multi-player crown. Can vehicles and huge airstrikes give it the edge over its competitor? Tough to call.

Golden Axe: Beast Rider

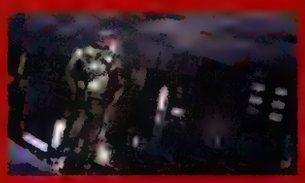
Only one character? It's the dwarf, right? No, obviously it's bikini-wearing lady Tyris Flair, who rides a dragon across 'vast' environments. There will be some nudity, apparently.

Gran Turismo 5

Can dozens of fast, shiny cars and Top Gear's Dunston Park raceway make up for the truly glacial development time? Kazunori Yamauchi probably hates the *Burnout* team.

Heroes

Tim Kring's hit series gets the Ubisoft treatment. It'll be nice to see all the superpowers on display, but could the massive cast of characters prove troublesome to squeeze in?



Infamous

Superhero sandbox games are a bit ubiquitous at the moment, but Infamous takes the clever tack of letting you decide whether to be good or evil. We'd be evil, obviously.

Iron Man

Robert Downey Jr's take on the man in the metal suit is being developed by – who else? – spandex-lovers Activision. No word on whether Downey stars, but the iron bits look good.

The Last Remnant

Square Enix are borrowing the Unreal engine for this tale of humans versus fish-monsters and giant cats – expect semi-turn-based combat and loads of quicktime events.

Lego Indiana Jones

Mola Ram, Marian Ravenwood and even Sean Connery get the yellow-brick treatment. Can't wait to see how they deal with the infamous Nazi-plane decapitation scene.

AND THE REST

Not only, but also...

Lost: The Videogame

Jack? Locke? Nope, you're playing as previously unheard-of photojournalist Elliot in this TV adaptation. Missions include photography, trading and 'finding fruit'. Sigh.

Mafia 2

The more gentlemanly old-school alternative to *GTA* kicks off with some classic Louis Prima and a basement execution. It's still set in the '40s and '50s, so expect vintage cars and guns.

Metal Gear Online

There have been *MGO*s before, but this standalone version's dedicated to 16-player online combat. You'll be able to 'hack' enemies to disable them, just like in *MGS4*.

Midnight Club: Los Angeles

With the biggest cities ever to grace a *Club* and the RAGE system borrowed from *GTA* ensuring different traffic flow at different times of day, this one already looks sharp.

Mirror's Edge

A parkour-inspired FPS? Sounds insane – until you see your feet pound the street and watch your arms whoosh past your head. Primary colours pick out routes, so falling shouldn't be an issue.

Operation Flashpoint 2: Dragon Rising

Op Flashpoint 1 developers Bohemia Rising are out; Codemasters' own team are in. It's looking reasonably good, but the trailer's still early.

The Outsider

CIA operative wrongly framed? Yawn. Ah, but here's the clever bit: open-ended gameplay means you can clear your name, wreak revenge or simply go really nasty. Clever.

PES 2009

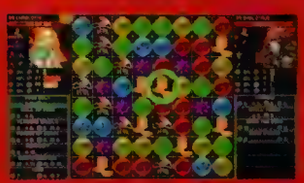
The world's mightiest football game snagged its studs in the Astroturf in 2007, but should be match-fit for the next season. Top priority: fixing the frustrating slowdown.

Phantasy Star Universe: Ambition Of The Illuminus

Not so much a sequel as an expansion pack, although you will be able to customise your face and use new abilities called 'Photon arts'. Intriguing.

Prototype

Think Hulk in a hoodie: the makers of *Ultimate Destruction* let you tear up great chunks of New York as a shape-shifting, soldier-stabbing, chopper-jacking anti-hero.



Puzzle Quest

The hyper-addictive PSP puzzle RPG with the crazy premise – match jewels to kill orcs – comes to PS2. And in the near future, don't be surprised to see a PS3 store download too.

Race Driver: GRID

The renamed *TOCA: Race Driver One* offers up an enjoyable mix of real circuits and fashionable-with-the-kids street racing, along with some saucy-looking muscle cars.

Rainy Woods

Serial killers, schizophrenic cops and Naomi Watts lookalikes – it's all gone a bit David Lynch in this survival horror. And have we mentioned the sinister twin midgets yet?

Resident Evil 5

Jun '*Onimusha*' Takeuchi takes the reins for the return of Chris Redfield, with gameplay that's pretty similar to *Resi 4* but the setting has been relocated to sunny Africa.

Saboteur

Pleasantville meets 'Allo 'Allo – well, sort of. Fight in Nazi-occupied France and turn geographical areas from goosestep-grey to freedom-bright with victories against the Bosch.

THE YEAR PSP WILL BE REBORN

Rumours of a PSP2 can wait... Sony's handheld is due a great 2008

PHOENIX FROM THE FLAMES

PSP strikes back

Although it's nice to settle down on the sofa with a big-budget epic, there's still a place for the little guy in PlayStation land. That place is on the train or the bus or in the toilet, or anywhere the PS3 can't go, playing some of the most carefully crafted and loveable games around. Some simply wouldn't fit in on PS3 – others explore the side stories of fave franchises. 2007 wasn't great for PSP, but if you pack this lot in your bag in 2008, even six hours in the Fanny Carriage with no buffet car should seem like a day at the races.

HALF FULL

"What's next for PSP?"

Haven't got one yet? It might be worth holding fire for Sony's redesigned handheld – not a sequel, more like a v2.0 – rumoured to be set for release in the autumn. It's expected to feature Bluetooth compatibility and new buttons for ease of UMD movie control. For those already owning a PSP, there's also the possibility of a TV tuner like the one available in Japan coming to the UK.

PSP'S MAIN EVENT

God Of War: Chains Of Olympus

Sony/Ready At Dawn
Summer
Kratos' youthful years, from the people behind PSP hit *Daxter*.

Kratos hates Zeus – that's sort of a given. But why's he so hot on killing the rest of the Greek deities in the forthcoming *GoW3*? That's the question that'll be answered by handheld prequel, *Chains Of Olympus*.

This PSP version of *GoW* deals with Kratos' time in service to Ares, when he bound Atlas to the service of the gods, as well as doing various odd jobs for Hades. Because it's a prequel he'll be without the powers he acquired in the other games, but he's got other abilities to compensate – the Eefrit, say, lets him unleash a hail of fire on enemies.

Sony might be saving the toughest baddies for *GoW3*, but there's no holding back on the scale – the first level features our psychopathic Spartan battling a giant basilisk across the ruins of Greek city Ilium. Later he'll head for the temple of sun-god Helios and the depths of Tartarus, en route to the double-cross by the gods that turns him against his masters for all eternity. This one should be a must-have.

Will this be PSP's best game?

Crab C Nesbitt The art style is certainly eye-catching, and damn fine-looking too.

Music man Tap buttons in time to the tunes to gather more men on your side.

Beaterator

Already released in an earlier version on the internet, this Timbaland-endorsed music mixing game's an interesting shift in styles for the team that did the PSP versions of *GTA*. You can check the original out at beaterator.rockstargames.com, but the PSP version will feature extra minigames.

Ape Academy 2

Already out in Japan, this sequel takes the original AA template – loads of minigames – and blends it with an insane plot involving bad guy Spectre creating a card-gaming tournament where the prize is a year's supply of bananas. Yeah, you heard.

Echochrome

Note to idiots who call this Escher-esque: it's actually based on the impossible drawings done by Oscar Reutersvard. Steer little men around rotating geometric shapes and try not to kill them: the simplest ideas are always the best.

Destroy All Humans: Big Willy's Revenge

A *Ratchet*-style disco ball, an acid-vomiting attack and a giant robot chicken that does deadly guffs – it's nice to see that *Destroy All Humans* is still taking its usual light-hearted approach to human genocide. Should be out in March.

Suits you, sir Ratchet's gentlemanly alter-ego is still a complete delight.

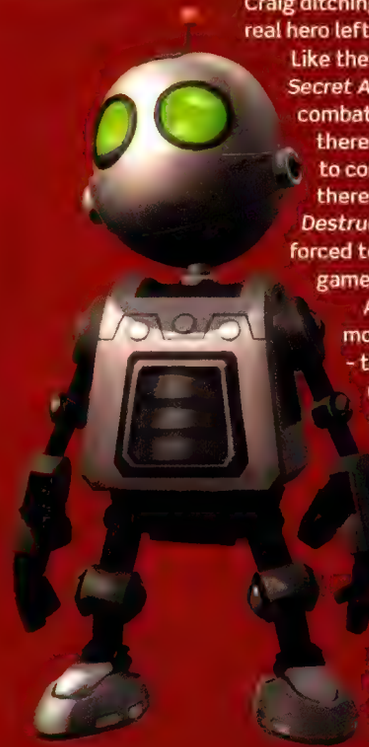
ROBOT LOVE

Secret Agent Clank

Who's making it? High Impact Games
When's it coming out? Summer
What is it? The first solo outing from the robotic gentleman's gentleman.
Anticipation: ●●●●●

This is what we've been waiting for since *Up Your Arsenal* introduced Clank's tuxedo-wearing alter ego: an entire games'-worth of gentlemanly fun with the real star of the *R&C* series. His bow tie's a boomerang, his rose is a robo-monster, and his cuff links are bombs: with Daniel Craig ditching Q branch, Clank's the only real hero left in town.

Like the PS2's *Ratchet Gladiator*, *Secret Agent Clank* emphasises combat over platforming, although there will be bits of leaping about to contend with. Less appealingly, there's also stealth – as in *Tools Of Destruction*, you'll occasionally be forced to partipate in rhythm action games or blow your own cover. Apparently the combat's more melee-focused than usual – the dapper robot's able to upgrade his Clank-Fu fighting style, as well as doing more friendly takes on *MK*'s finishers to see opponents away. He's fighting to clear his name after being framed for a crime he didn't commit, but the game's set before *Tools Of Destruction* so probably won't explain those ridiculous Zoni bits from the last game. Shame.



Patapon

Who's making it? Interlink
When's it coming out? March 2008
What is it? A rhythm-action spear-em-up from the makers of Loco Roco.
Anticipation: ●●●●●

2D graphics? Tiny creatures? Charming singing? Weird name? Yes, the creators of *LocoRoco* are sticking to what they know, but *Patapon*'s a bit more...aggressive than its spiritual predecessor.

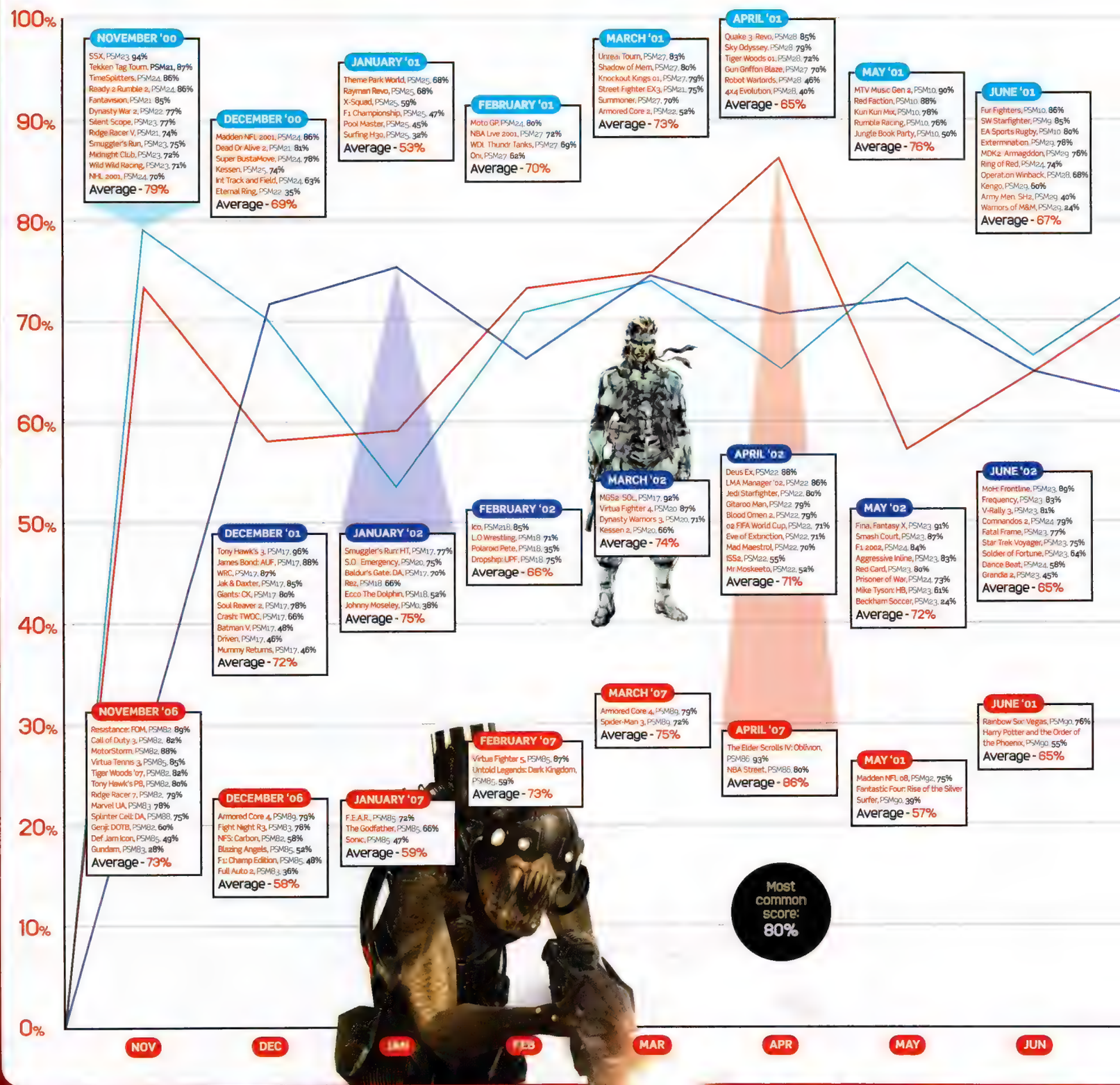
The premise is simple, but weird: playing as the Patapons, a simple people with gigantic eyes in the middle of their bodies, you need to defend yourself from giant crabs and dragons by banding together through the medium of music. Starting as a lone chap, hitting ⓐ and ⓞ on the 'Pon pon, pata pon' of the beat attracts more men to your cause, until eventually you're fighting with zeppelins and siege engines. Although the commands you've got seem restricted to 'advance' and 'attack', there's plenty of variety in the way the tiny chaps have at their enemies – and there's even a combo system we've yet to fully deconstruct. If the demo speech is representative of the final game, there's also a bit of net humour in there – your chaps squeal 'OMG!' when they get excited. And your tutor is a potty-mouthed singing tree.

"Defend yourself from giant crabs and dragons through music"

MASSIVE GRAPH DAMAGE

PS3: Year two will be the best... PROOF

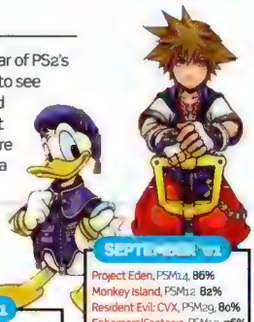
We use PS2's history to predict what's in store for PS3's second year



First year of PS2 | Second year of PS2 | First year of PS3

The Theory

The plan here is to compare the first year of PS2's lifespan with the the first year of PS3's to see which fared better. We've then compiled data from PS2's second year and used it to attempt to predict how PS3 might fare in it second year on-sale. And we made a really pretty graph in the process. Aw.



Highest-scoring game: GTA: Vice City, 97%

JULY '01
Onimusha: Warlords, PSM7, 80%
ATV Offroad Fury, PSM29, 70%
Crazy Taxi, PSM10, 80%
Gran Turismo 3, PSM13, 93%
Average - 80%

AUGUST '01
Dark Cloud, PSM11, 81%
Bloody Roar 3, PSM10, 79%
NBA Street, PSM10, 74%
The Bouncer, PSM10, 66%
Extreme-G3, PSM13, 60%
Star Wars: Super Bombad Racing, PSM10, 45%
Average - 67%

SEPTEMBER '01
Project Eden, PSM14, 86%
Monkey Island, PSM12, 82%
Resident Evil: CVX, PSM29, 80%
EphemeralFantasia, PSM12, 76%
Le Mans 24 Hours, PSM12, 73%
This Is Football '02, PSM14, 71%
UEFA Challenge, PSM12, 56%
Gauntlet: DL, PSM10, 32%
Average - 69%

OCTOBER '01
GTA3, PSM216, 92%
Twist'd Metal Black, PSM13, 80%
Freak Out, PSM13, 79%
Spy Hunter, PSM14, 79%
Time Crisis 2, PSM16, 78%
Klonoa 2, PSM11, 73%
7 Blades, PSM11, 72%
Alex Ferguson's '01, PSM15, 65%
Rune: VM, PSM13, 56%
DNA, PSM16, 37%
WDL War Jetz, PSM11, 29%
Average - 64%

NOVEMBER '01
PES, PSM16, 95%
Half-Life, PSM16, 90%
Burnout, PSM15, 88%
Silent Hill 2, PSM15, 88%
Smackdown! JBL, PSM16, 80%
Armlade, PSM16, 77%
Splashdown, PSM16, 75%
Age of Empires 2, PSM15, 76%
NHL 2002, PSM15, 70%
FIFA 2002, PSM16, 69%
Alone In The Dark, PSM15, 66%
Robot Wars: AOD, PSM16, 63%
ESPN XGS, PSM15, 61%
Average - 77%

JULY '02
Slam Tennis, PSM25, 77%
Barbarian, PSM25, 66%
Freekstyle, PSM25, 59%
Armored Core 2 PSM24, 56%
Circus Maximus, PSM25, 55%
Endgame, PSM25, 49%
Average - 60%

AUGUST '02
Ejay Clubworld, PSM26, 84%
TOCA Race Driver, PSM26, 82%
Matt Hoffman's 2, PSM26, 77%
Samurai, PSM25, 74%
Transworld Surf, PSM26, 72%
Dino Stalker, PSM26, 58%
Men In Black 2, PSM26, 42%
Sven's World Cup, PSM26, 08%
Average - 67%

SEPTEMBER '02
Tekken 4, PSM27, 90%
The Thing, PSM27, 83%
GT Concept '02, PSM25, 79%
Conflict: DS, PSM27, 78%
UFC: Throwdown, PSM27, 75%
Stuntman, PSM26, 74%
Turok Evolution, PSM27, 71%
Riding Spirits, PSM27, 70%
Ninja Assault, PSM27, 68%
Ferrari Challenge, PSM27, 67%
Eggo Mania, PSM27, 40%
Average - 66%

OCTOBER '02
TimeSplitters 2, PSM28, 95%
PES2, PSM24, 93%
Onimusha 2, PSM22, 89%
Hitman 2, PSM28, 89%
Kelly Slater's, PSM28, 75%
Average - 88%

NOVEMBER '02
GTA: Vice City, PSM29, 97%
Ratchet & Clank, PSM29, 91%
Kingdom Hearts, PSM23, 88%
Colin McRae 3, PSM29, 88%
Red Faction 2, PSM29, 85%
WRC2 Extreme, PSM29, 85%
Rocky, PSM29, 84%
Smackdown! SYM, PSM29, 82%
Haven: COTK, PSM29, 81%
FIFA 2003, PSM29, 81%
Auto Modellista, PSM28, 80%
Gungrave, PSM27, 79%
007: Nightfire, PSM30, 78%
LoTR: TTT, PSM29, 76%
Summoner 2, PSM29, 73%
F1 2002, PSM29, 68%
Dynasty Tactics, PSM29, 59%
Average - 81%

DECEMBER '02
Tony Hawk's 4, PSM30, 94%
Virtua Tennis 2, PSM30, 88%
GP Challenge, PSM31, 85%
Tiger Woods '03, PSM30, 80%
The Getaway, PSM31, 78%
Battle Engine, PSM31, 78%
Defender, PSM31, 76%
Reign of Fire, PSM30, 71%
LoTR: FOTR, PSM30, 70%
Spyro: ETD, PSM30, 68%
Star Wars: BH, PSM31, 62%
Minority Report, PSM31, 60%
Micro Machines, PSM30, 59%
BMX XXX, PSM30, 58%
Virtua Cop, PSM30, 44%
Average - 71%

JULY '07
Ninja Gaiden Sigma, PSMxx, 90%
Stuntman: Ignition, PSMg2, 75%
The Darkness, PSMg0, 71%
Average - 78%

AUGUST '07
Warhawk, PSMg2, 90%
GRAW 2, PSMg1, 86%
Transformers, PSMg1, 52%
Average - 76%

SEPTEMBER '07
Colin McRae: DiRT, PSMg2, 88%
Singstar, PSMg3, 81%
Sega Rally, PSMg3, 79%
Tiger Woods 08, PSMg3, 68%
Heavenly Sword, PSMg3, 65%
FIFA 08, PSMg4, 63%
Average - 74%

OCTOBER '07
Skate, PSMg3, 91%
Juiced 2: HIN, PSMg4, 80%
PES 2008, PSMg4, 86%
SmackDown '08, PSMg4, 79%
Eye of Judgement, PSMg4, 79%
All-Pro 2K8, PSMg4, 74%
Folklore, PSMg3, 69%
Lair, PSMg3, 54%
DW: Gundam, PSMg4, 49%
Average - 72%

NOVEMBER '07
Call of Duty 4, PSMg5, 94%
Ratchet: TOD, PSMg3, 93%
Guitar Hero 3, PSMg5, 90%
Tony Hawk's PG, PSMg4, 85%
Assassin's Creed, PSMg5, 81%
Lego Star Wars, PSMg5, 80%
NFS: ProStreet, PSMg5, 79%
Stranglehold, PSMg3, 78%
The Simpsons, PSMg5, 70%
MOH: Airborne, PSMg6, 69%
Jericho, PSMg4, 65%
Bladestorm, PSMg4, 61%
Kane And Lynch, PSMg5, 58%
Conan, PSMg4, 45%
Beowulf, PSMg5, 41%
Average - 73%

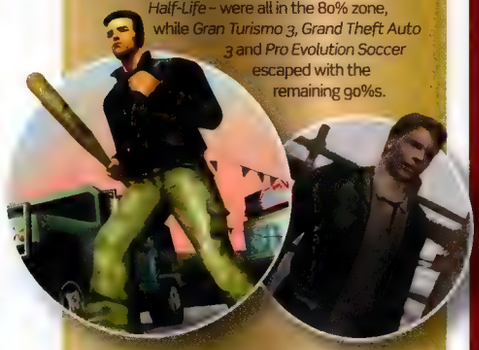
Lowest-scoring game: Sven's World Cup, 08%

JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | DEC

PS2 Year one

Average [illegible] for year: 69%

What this tells us: Frankly, that there was a lot of rubbish released for PS2 in its first year. Of all the launch games, only SSX received a 90% score, and it took another six months for another to arrive in the form of, weirdly, MTV Music Generator. The year's standout games – *Shadow Of Memories, Onimusha, Red Faction, Silent Hill 2, Half-Life* – were all in the 80% zone, while *Gran Turismo 3, Grand Theft Auto 3* and *Pro Evolution Soccer* escaped with the remaining 90%s.



PS2 Year two

Average [illegible] for year 71%

What this tells us: The difference in percentage from year one to year two might not look like much, but closer inspection reveals that the big games were better – especially in the key month of November. The average has been damaged by the amount of crap that was released. In year two, we had *MGS2, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3, Jak & Daxter, Ico, Deus Ex, Final Fantasy X, Tekken 4, Kingdom Hearts, TimeSplitters 2, Ratchet & Clank*... all incredible games. Expect year two of PS3 to follow suit.

PS3 Year one

Average [illegible] for year 71%

What this tells us: Again, only one 90% score among the launch games; *Resistance*. The gap between the next was five months (*The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion*) and, on average, games were slightly worse than in the early days of PS2. Other 90%-scorers were *Ninja Gaiden Sigma, Warhawk, Skate, CoD4, Guitar Hero 3* and *Ratchet & Clank* – all arriving towards the end of the year. It's official, PS3 had a better first year than PS2, despite opinion to the contrary.

THE YEAR OF PS2'S LAST STAND

PS2 games might be drying up, but a redesigned PS2 means there's life in the multi-million seller yet

STILL KEEPING GOING

New look PS2

With the first batch of PS3s into the country fitting an entire Emotion Engine – the foundation of the PS2 – into its metal case, it's maybe no surprise that Sony have managed to squash the internal workings of the PS2 down to a point where they can make an even smaller model. The compact PS2, due for release next year, is about the same size as the slimline model, but now incorporates the power supply into its casing. That should also make it cheaper, and with a price drop from $129 to $99 confirmed for the US, we could see the UK model retail for a piffling £75. Is it worth it? Well, obviously not if you've already got a PS3 – or indeed an old PS2 – but this could keep the second-hand market for games alive and well, as well as ensuring that your impoverished/technophobic friends have got the requisite hardware for a *SingStar* party. But is there anything else left to look forward to?

"We could see PS2 for £75. But is there much else to look forward to?"

DEATH'S DOOR

"Seriously, is PS2 dead?"

Sort of. Sure, the release list is dwindling – hot games next year are set to include *Pinball Hall Of Fame, The Spiderwick Chronicles* and an American Idol-themed edition of *Karaoke Revolution* – but if you still haven't got a PS3 there's a glimmer of hope. Bigger studios are staying loyal with downscaled versions of hit games – *Star Wars: Force Unleashed* and *Ghostbusters* will appear on PS2 – while PSP games like *Destroy All Humans* and *Chains Of Olympus* are likely to make the jump to the bigger console. With the right pricing, PS2 will continue to sell to youngsters – the PSone outsold Xbox in the UK for months. And hey, there's a whole world of games out there that you haven't bought yet. Played *Siren 2*? *God Hand*? No? Then go do it.

Hero Nights flies in pseudo 3D
The boss battles are unique in feel
But the game's more 2D
The combo based score system is surprisingly deep

Jester minute Once upon a time, this game was as important as *Super Mario 64*.

Nights Into Dreams

Who's making it? Sega
When's it coming out? Never
What is it? A beautiful flight of fancy from the makers of *Sonic*.
Anticipation

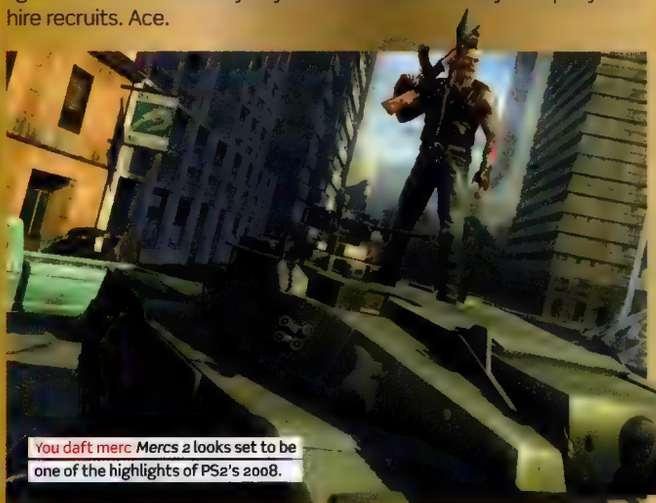
Oh, if only we'd made more noise. After years of clamouring from the Japanese hardcore, classic Sega game *NiGHTs* - originally released on the Saturn – is being remade for PS2... but only in Japan. The decision to put out an upgrade of the charming tale of a court jester protecting humans' dreams is 'purely commercial', say Sega – so if more people in the UK had kicked up a fuss, we'd have got one too. Maybe there's still time for that petition?

Boom or bust *Mercs 2*'s explosions should certainly push PS2 to its limits

Mercenaries 2: World In Flames

Who's making it? Pandemic
When's it coming out? March
What is it? Sandbox warmongering from the people who brought you *Star Wars: Battlefront*
Anticipation?

Although we're mostly excited about the PS3 edition, *Mercs 2* is one of a handful of massive games that show hints of retaining their glory on PS2. The original brought new highs in explode-physics to the machine, and this edition promises to push the boundaries until they creak with improved airstrikes and more copter-jacking than ever. This time the Venezuelan government getting all mardy about being portrayed in an unsavoury light, but the classic gang of mercs return, including beardy Swede Mattias Nillson. It's a game about political corruption, military coups and massive, great explosions – which are helped along with the ability to set fire to stuff with your lighter. You can also set you your own Private Military Company and hire recruits. Ace.

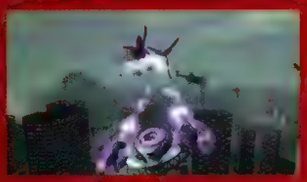


You daft merc *Mercs 2* looks set to be one of the highlights of PS2's 2008.

"Promises to push the boundaries until they creak"

Backbreaker
This could be the closest thing US footie fans ever get to the barmy brutality of *Red Card Soccer*. Backbreaker boasts the euphoria physics engine, meaning every tackle should be different.

Dark Siders
One of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, War, has been thrown out of the gang and is now battling against his old chums. Cue *God Of War* style boss-and-button bashing.



Destroy All Humans: Path Of The Furon
Everybody's favourite anal prober is back as Crypto heads to the '70s. New spaceships and amazing city-destroying weaponry await.

Hail To The Chimp
The lion's been knocked off his throne and now the other animals want a shot at being king of the jungle in this political satire complete with mad minigames. 2008's weirdest one?

HeiSt
Codemasters' upcoming crime game gives you control of a group of bank robbers. And it's your job to knock off every building society, bar and bistro you can find. Charming.

Hellboy: The Science of Evil
Based on the comic series and Guillermo del Toro flick, this scrapper promises destructible scenery and contextual fighting moves. Should please those eager to bash some bambinis.

Legendary: The Box
A moody FPS set on the streets of New York, with a twist. Art thief Charles Deckard unwittingly opens Pandora's box, unleashing werewolves, griffins and other mythic beasties on the Big Apple.

NFL Tour
A bit like the *NFL Street* series, this. You star as a rookie football player and travel around America with NFL stars competing in a fictional football road show. More soon.

Pain
Fling your ragdoll stuntman around fully destructible towns with a huge catapult and try to hurt him as much as possible. It's the game that *Jackass* should've been. Review soon.

Rogue Warrior: Black Razor
Real-life SEAL and author Richard Marcinko stars in this FPS set behind enemy line in Korea. Online co-op play and randomly generated maps are certainly spiking our interests.

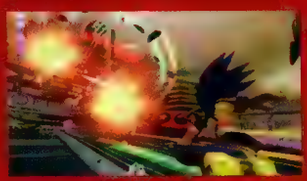
THERE'S STILL MORE...

Not only, but also...

Saint's Row 2
Unlike *GTA*, *SR2* picks up where it left off – in an expanded version of Stilwater after the explosive end of the first game. Team co-op and sandbox options have made us interested.

Silent Hill V
An American development team, an ex-character who's a soldier and more emphasis on guns? We certainly fear the new *Silent Hill*, but for all the wrong reasons. Uh-oh.

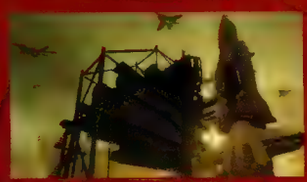
Skate 2
Unconfirmed but inevitable, we're predicting worldwide travel, create-a-park options and more tricks for the game that'll be taking on *Tony Hawk 10*. We already can't wait.



Sonic Riders: Zero Gravity
Sonic, Eggman and NiGHTs all return for a PS2 race-off that, bizarrely, promises to let you upgrade your hoverboard mid-race. Poor old Sonic, when will you get a decent game again?

Soul Calibur IV
Mitsurugi and the gang return, although it's hinted that the king who created the Soul Calibur will finally appear – and that you'll be able to break weapons. This should be awesome.

Tekken 6
Sultry dancer Zafina, German hermaphrodite Leo, passionate Spaniard Miguel and obese American Bob make this the most racially stereotyped *Tekken* yet. Yeah!



Tom Clancy's Air Combat
The US has been attacked by terrorists again – why do they all still live there? – and you've got to get in a plane and blow them all to bits. We're keen to see how the online mode handles.

Tom Clancy's EndWar
Yanks fight Russians and Euros, and only good old blighty stays neutral – that's the premise for this super-sized RTS, where the aim's to survive a nuclear war. Clancy's a busy man, eh?

Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty
The Nazis have taken America and you're not resisting so much as surviving. The premise is intriguingly Robert Harris, but what we've seen of the gameplay so far disappoints a little.

Viking: Battle For Asgard
God Of War with Vikings? Well, the premise is similar – beardy norseman Skarin rebels against chief deity Odin – but the battles are more on a par with *Dynasty Warriors* in scale.

WarDevil: Unleash The Beast Within
This tale of robots first surfaced more than two years ago, but there's still little to see apart from buffed robots and gritty desert.

Wet
"*Stranglehold* with a girl," might be doing *Wet* a disservice, since the girl – 'Rubi' – also does backflips and hacks people up with a katana. And she looks better in a bubble bath than Chow Yun Fat.

The Wheelman
Vin 'monotone' Diesel stars in this film tie-in about a gravel-voiced getaway driver. The trailer's about twice as stupid as the intro of The Transporter, and that's saying something.

White Knight Chronicles
Dragon Quest makers Level-5's first project for PS3 looks to one-up *Shadow Of The Colossus*, with enemies the size of cities and a world map that lets you walk from one end to the other. Huge.

UFC: The Videogame
All we've seen so far is that 'concept footage' trailer of Quinton Jackson slamming Chuck Liddell, but with WWE developers Yuke's on board, we're hopeful for this one.

White Knight Story

"Enemies the size of cities and a map that lets you walk from one side to the other"

And there are still loads more...

Ghostbusters: The Videogame
Vivendi Games

Aquatopia
Sony

Toy Home
Sony

Dark Mist
Sony

Ferrari Challenge
System 3 Arcade Software

Commando 3
Capcom

Rocketmen: Axis of Evil
Capcom

Project Origin
Warner Bros. Interactive

Brothers In Arms: Hell's Highway
Ubisoft

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian
Disney

Dirty Harry
Warner Bros Interactive

Data-Fly
OriGO Gaming Entertainment

Rainbow Six Vegas 2
Ubi Soft

Killing Day
Ubi Soft

Killzone 2
Sony

MX Vs. ATV Untamed
THQ

Metro 2003: The Last Refuge
4A Games

Monster Madness
SouthPeak Interactive

Rise of the Argonauts
Codemasters

Steambot Chronicles 2
Irem Software Engineering

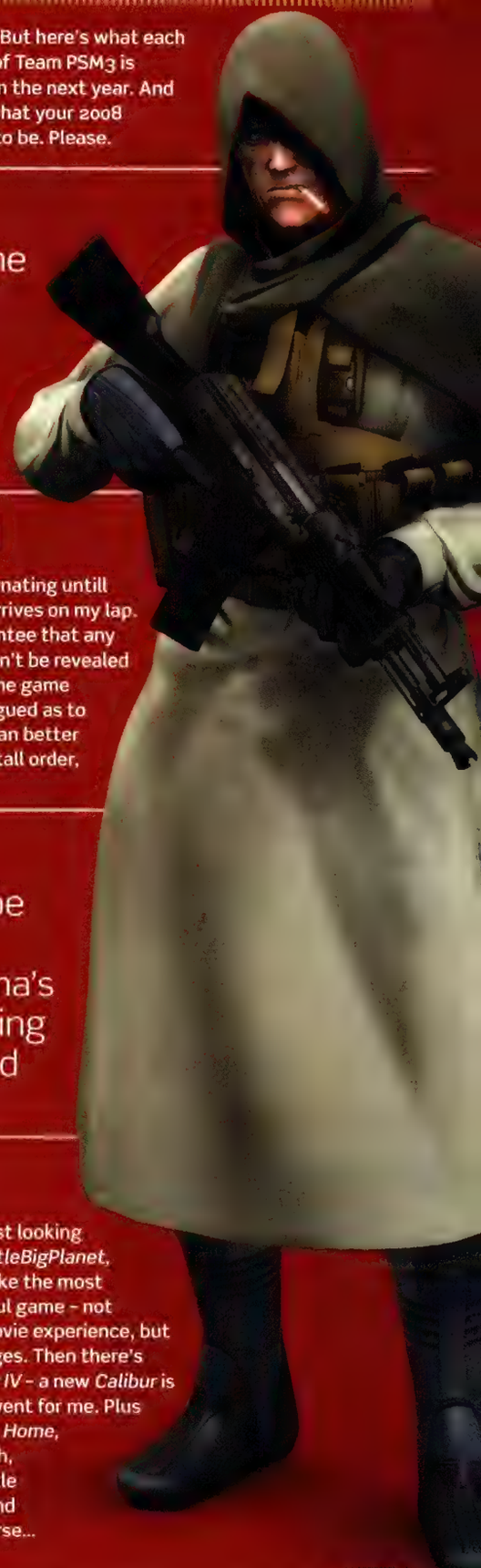
Unconfirmed, or hotly rumoured...

Black 2 – cited on an offcial release list early last year EA | *Prince Of Persia 4* – concept art leaked on the net over a year ago Ubi Soft | Team Ico game – most likely an *Ico* sequel Sony | *Resistance Fall of Man 2* (set in the USA) Sony | *Kingdom Hearts* sequel PS3 Square Enix | *Hitman 5* [illegible] | *Freedom Fighters 2* EA | *Shellshock 2* – originally by *Killzone* developer Guerilla (now owned by Sony), but the franchise belongs to... Eidos | *FIFA 09* – obviously, plus *Tiger, NHL, NBA* etc... EA | *Dark Void* – teaser trailer of this steampunk action adventure was shown at their recent Gamer's Day in London Capcom | *Jak & Daxter* sequel – but we're more likely to see Naughty Dog make *Uncharted 2*, if it sells better than it has recently [illegible] | *Assassin's Creed 2* – the original has 'shipped' – not sold – over 2.5m copies worldwide, so a sequel is a shoe-in, especially given the daft ending [illegible] | New Kojima project – *ZOE3* is a dirty word, but once whispered, it's more likely to be something completely new and lower budget than *MGS4* [illegible] | *Star Wars Battlefront 3* – from Free Radical [illegible]ctivision

[illegible] TEAM'S CHOICE

What PSM3 can't wait for

So that's every game that'll be coming your way in 2008 – there's a lot to get excited about, from *Killzone 2* to *White Knight Story*, *Ghostbusters* to, erm, *Hail To The Chimp*. Well, maybe we're not so excited about that. But here's what each individual member of Team PSM3 is looking forward to in the next year. And email us to tell us what your 2008 highlights look set to be. Please.



Dan

MGS4 will probably be the best game ever, but I'm holding out for 1) Next-gen *Onimusha* 2) *SSX5* - with unbelievable weather effects and terrain deformation and 3) Team Ico's *Ico* sequel. Fingers crossed...

Nathan

With *GTAIV*, *Killzone 2* and *MGS4* arriving, it seems like 2008 will be the year of amazing sequels. But I'm more hopeful for a new *Fight Night* or *SSX* than anything else this year. Oh, and Home should be a laugh, so long as it's not just about meeting your mates in the virtual pub and hitting the 'Dance' button over again.

Richard

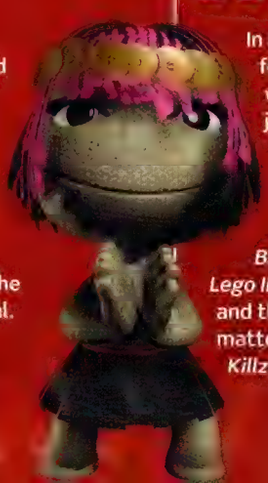
I'm planning on hibernating untill *Metal Gear Solid 4* arrives on my lap. This way I can guarantee that any major plot twists won't be revealed to me before I play the game myself. I'm also intrigued as to whether *Killzone 2* can better *Call of Duty 4*. It's a tall order, but here's hoping.

Milf

I hate to be obvious, but it's got to be *MGS4*. The version we played last month hints at greatness, and Kojima's track record is perfect. I'm also looking forward to *TimeSplitters 4*, *Haze* and *Killzone 2* to supply my shooter fix.

Andy

I'm looking forward to developers getting used to PS3's hardware and really testing its limits. But mainly I'm looking forward to big RPGs like *White Knight Story* and *Fallout 3*, because the choice of role-players on PS3 at the moment is pretty dismal. It's either *Oblivion* or nothing right now.



Dave

In 2008, I'm most looking forward to *LittleBigPlanet*, which looks like the most joyfully gleeful game – not wannabe-movie experience, but *game* – in ages. Then there's *Soul Calibur IV* – a new *Calibur* is always an event for me. Plus *Brutal Legend*, *Home*, *Lego Indy Jones*... oh, and there's the little matter of *GTAIV* and *Killzone 2*, of course...

Your words, your pictures, your videos...

Your Space

Start

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Choice cuts from the PSM3 mail sack.

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The best gamer videos out there.

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PlayStation Network Send your messages to PSM

MySpace & the PSM3 blog Go to myspace.com/psm3 or check out psm3mag.com

Online Play the team at online games and win big

Letters To PSM3

Your letters and emails, sifted and printed

Videogame music loses its edge

LETTER

I recently found a great website called VG Music (www.vgmusic.com). It's got all the old classic game tunes on it, which I have to say are still sounding great. While listening to some of my favourite tunes from my favourite games on PSone (I'm only 16, so that's as far back as I go), the memories came flooding back of titles that I really enjoyed and connected to when I was younger. Games which had a spirit, like *Final Fantasy IX*, the *Crash Bandicoot* series (I admit it, they were great) and even games like *Croc* and *Klonoa: Door To Phantomile*. All these games must have had a lasting impact on me when I was younger, as I can still remember them vividly after hearing the music.

> "It's not as memorable as it used to be. It just doesn't have any spirit"

The problem is I really can't see that happening with the games of today. I don't and never will get a warm feeling inside when I think back to *Call Of Duty 4* or *Assassin's Creed*. Even games like *Final Fantasy*, I think, are losing their magic, although they are still great. Maybe it's just me getting 'older' or the music's not as memorable (which could be a key component to a game), but I really do feel sorry for the younger generation of gamers. Can you think of a PS3 game whose music, heard years down the line, will fill their minds with imagination like the old classics?

Christopher Vautrinot, email

Good point, but when we visited the site, we spent more time listening to *Streets of Rage*, *Bionic Commando* and other 8-bit stuff i.e. games from when we were 11-16 years old. Cod moral: nostalgia shields our ears from the truth. That said, licensed music is killing modern games – what relevance does, say, Peter Bjorn and John's (great) Young Folks have to *FIFA 08*? Music of old – the *Mario* and *Sonic* themes, *OutRun's* Magical Sound Shower – were composed solely for the game. Could you really hum or whistle any of *Assassin's Creed's* music? Sure, it was orchestral, but lacks the charm of, say, Nobuo Uematsu's famous tinkly *Final Fantasy* theme tune. And how many recent movie themes can you remember? Tenner says none as good as Star Wars, ET, Indy, 007... all over ten years ago.

Tuning out Can you think of any game from 2007 with a distinct theme tune? And, no, *MGS4* is out next year...

Duty called

If my mum reads this, I'm dead. I went looking in her room for my Christmas presents and I found *Call Of Duty 4*. It was open and I was in the house alone so I gave it a spin. I immediately got hooked on the online mode and didn't hear my mum come in and go upstairs. I had just called my first air strike when she came down with the *CoD* box and said the game wasn't in it. My stomach exploded with butterflies. What was I to do? She wouldn't let me have my other presents if she found out!

Well, anyway she didn't suspect me, and she said she would try to get it replaced the following day. My sister had come into the room at that moment and sat down. I needed to get *CoD4* out of the

Present tense No surprises for James.

"You What?"

Thanks for writing. No. Really

Is a Twix a biscuit or a chocolate bar? It's a tough one because Twixes are sold separately in the chocolate bar section, but the multi-packs are sold in the biscuit section. PSM3, what are your thoughts?

Keyran Solo, MySpace

It's an age-old question, and one that, unfortunately, we can't answer.

Has anyone played the *TimeShift* multi-player demo? One word; LAG SLAG! Well, that's two, but my education

PSNMail

Our PS3 username is PSM3uk. Send us a message. Please

Tiny Dan-cer
I heard Dan D is really small. If so, how small is he? **DG2010**
Smaller than most buildings.

Hole truth
Does this actually work? Am I sending a message to a black hole? **ElmoXL**
Some consider the PSM3 office to be a black hole of sorts, in that sucks the life out of everyone who enters it. Joke. Well, kind of.

Fat of the land
Xbox is for fat Americans with chubby fingers. **AmhrannabFiann**
We're sure there are as many PS3 owners with fat fingers as there are Xbox ones. Not as many though, obviously.

Game for a laugh
I just bought a 60Gb PS3. Could you recommend some games? **Benjaminho**
Er, aren't we doing that already every month by writing a magazine?

Pulling rank
omdzzz i woz nearly a General in *Warhawk* and now I'm a fukin Airman. WTF? **smoothdudesteve**
There have been reports of the *Warhawk* server resetting peoples' stats...

PlayStation Network send your messages to *PSM3uk*

Shot down We're glad rumble is here in time for *Killzone 2* and its massive guns.

PS3 and hide it in case my mum looked there, so with a master plan I went upstairs and spilt some water on my sister's carpet. I went to the room with her and the PS3 in and told her that our kitten had had an accident – she ran upstairs and I hid the game in a *Resistance* case.

But at school I got nervous and was convinced she would see through my lies. I decided it was time to come clean. Controlling my shaking hands I approached my mum and began to confess when she said that they had replaced it free of charge!

I now have two copies of *COD4* for the price of one but lost my pride in the process, what should I do with the spare copy?
James, email

We really shouldn't have printed this, should we...?

Rumble in the jungle

In your mag you were debating about the new DualShock 3 controller. Do we really need it? The vibration in most PS2 games is rather annoying, with the exception of war games as it makes firing guns feel more realistic.

The Sixaxis allows for more free movement because there's no rubbish wire, which also makes you feel more a part of the game that you're playing. The option should be a rumble pack, like the N64 had, that you can add on if you want vibration. Do you agree?
Michael Powsford, Portsmouth

Well, it is optional, as law demands that all vibration-equipped games come with the option to turn rumble on or off. Something to do with arthritis. We love the DualShock 3, and prefer its weightiness to the SixAxis. The rumble pack idea would mean people would have to buy batteries, whereas with DS3 it's all in-built.

We need a hero

This is an electronic letter about *Grand Theft Auto* 'heroes' past and future.

The general rogues gallery is Claude Speed, Tommy Vercetti, CJ, Tony Cipriani then Vic Vance. The fan favourite remains Mr Vercetti because he was a five-star psychopath, closely followed by the mute from *GTA3*. Many people found CJ's duality wasn't believable, however he made up for it by being the wittiest character so far. Vic Vance was just a whiny, nonsensical mess of a character. Anyway, the fans seem to be torn when it comes to Niko Bellic the Eastern European immigrant, hoping for another 'gangsta' or 'mobster', but the immigrant criminal direction is brilliant as far as I'm concerned.

Also people have been saying he looks weak – don't they realise that these guys being smuggled into the US could rip Tony Soprano a new one? But I'm still a little worried he might suffer the same fate as CJ and Vic. I just want him to be amoral – is that so much to ask from a *GTA* game?
Andrew Miller, email

Rockstar have attempted to give a couple of their characters morals – like you say, CJ and Vic Vance – but it always ends up looking, well, a bit stupid. *GTA* heroes are better when they're completely moral-free; like Claude, *GTA3*'s mute lead character. It suits the vibe of the game more, although it doesn't go down well with Daily Mail-reading reactionaries.

Skate or die

I heard on the podcast that Andy wanted to learn how to skateboard after playing EA's *Skate*. Well, I can

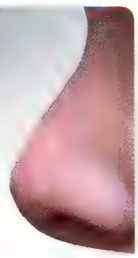
wasn't great.
Rich!!!, MySpace
Yeah, it's pretty bad. I'm gonna be on TV as an extra in Touch Of Frost. Yay!
Chris, MySpace
What are you playing? A corpse? A prostitute? Have fun!

Thieves guild Who's your fave *GTA* anti-hero? Ours is this silent psychopath from *GTA3*.

'Best' of the Blog

Visit PSM3MAG.COM and have your say

"Very little is known about the world of smells."
Posted by: Underdose



"Violence, sex and swearing make the *GTA* games what they are!"
Posted by: Ragon

'Best' of the Rest

Meanwhile, Vegito70 shares his staggeringly wrong opinions with the group; "*GTA*? Meh. *Uncharted*? CRAP." Elsewhere, Midjet talks peripherals. "I'd like a portable toilet. It's so annoying having to get up to go while playing *Call Of Duty 4*." Crikey, is it *that* much of a strain?

Blog We post every day. Mostly. Go to psm3mag.com for more.

Reader Critic

Disagree with our reviews? Then show us how it's done

Six of the best Some people love it, some people hate it.

Rainbow Six: Vegas

According to Patrick Gallagher, we were wrong with our review...

Reader Profile

Name **Patrick Gallagher**
Location **Newcastle**
Fave games ***Oblivion, CoD4, Rainbow 6 Vegas***
About me **Still in school studying for my GCSEs. Urgh.**

Your reviews are usually spot-on, but I must say I totally disagree with you on one game: *Rainbow Six: Vegas*. You gave it a very harsh review and then in your Christmas edition you gave it a damning review for its online play. In my opinion, you are completely wrong.

I've been playing the game for a good couple of months now and the amount of fun is endless. My cousin and I play on it all the time in the many different game modes. There's something there for everyone; an in-depth single-player, a compelling co-op in both the storyline and terrorist hunt (great addition) and finally a great online mode packed with cool features and a huge amount of things to unlock.

Nearly every other magazine I have read has given this game glowing reviews – I just don't see how you can rate it so badly. I admit it has some minor flaws, for example the online game's connection system is quite annoying, but it's the same in *COD4* (which is also great). Even though it does restrict your ability to connect to the games you want, it does make the online very fair. Also the lag can get a bit annoying but it's not like it makes it unplayable.

76% is ridiculous. The overall game is great and much, much better than most titles out for the PS3. With all its great features in both single-player and co-op, taking into account its minor flaws, I think this game is definitely worth 90%. It's a great game with great potential and I am very much looking forward to the new one which will (hopefully) have ironed out all of the previous minor flaws. You got this rating wrong, but I still love your mag and trust all of your reviews. **Patrick Gallagher**

Reader Verdict

A great online game with minor flaws that don't ruin the overall experience. **90**

@ Email us Subject 'Critic' to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Or post a review to the usual address.

Prince Of Persia

Why *Sands Of Time* is the best of the series

This is easily the best *Prince Of Persia* game ever made. The sequels made the Prince all dark and moody and it ruined the series. In this game he's actually like a prince, with a posh accent. In the other games he's all gruff and angry like Kratos. Stupid

Anyway, this was the first game to introduce time control. If you make a mistake you can just simply return to where you were and try again. You can also use the time powers to solve puzzles. But it's the feel and atmosphere of the game that makes it so good. The graphics still look good because they were so well designed and the music is very cinematic. The developers should have kept it simple instead of introducing loads of new stupid elements in *The Two Thrones*. This is definitely a modern classic. **Rory Williams** **91**

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

Drake's Fortune wins another fan

Finally, an original game PS3 owners can be proud of. You just wouldn't see a game like this on any other console. It's an adventure game that takes a lot of inspiration from the likes of Indiana Jones. The game is a mixture of platforming and shooting, but you will spend most of your time shooting people. The cut-scenes are as good as some films I've seen and really engage you with the action. One of the best bits is when you are riding a jet-ski over river rapids. The water effects are amazing and you have to avoid explosive barrels. The game's levels are full of things you've seen in other games, but really well made. You're too busy having fun to notice. This really is a great game. **Rick Briers** **93**

What's in store

The state of the PlayStation Store at the moment is a disgrace. And I don't mean the lack of demos, but the quality of the download games. Some are really ace, like *fl0w* and *Calling All Cars*, but there's an embarrassing lack of original games compared to Xbox Live's *Arcade*. Of course, it's easier to develop for Xbox because it uses the same system architecture as a PC, but Sony should be supporting small companies to make their Store as relevant as Microsoft's. For instance, *Rez* has been released on Xbox as an HD remake. Where's ours? It's not coming out, apparently. Rubbish. Sort out the store, please, Sony.

Donovan Parfett, email

Well, you're right. Sort of. But here's some good news; the PS3 version of *Super Street Fighter 2 HD remix* – a souped-up, high-def remake of *SF2 Turbo* – is actually better on PS3. Why? Because XBLA games have a size limit, meaning Capcom USA had to remove frames of animation and a few other things. But since there's no limit on the PSN, we get it as it was intended. And, hey, there are plenty of trailers for rubbish Blu-ray movies that you will never buy on the PS Store, eh? We just want more original games along the lines of Xbox's *Geometry Wars*. *Blast Factor* was pretty good, but...

Streets of rage **Both Xbox 360 and PS3 get the SF2 HD remake, but our version's best.**

UK myspace
a place for friends
Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and join us

PSM3's Top Eight

MySpace readers who rock our world

electroLUCAS

ABOUT HIM

"I was born under a bad sign."

INTERESTS

"Alkaline Trio are the best band ever. Tom Green is a hero of mine. I also like The Mighty Boosh."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Skate, Assassin's Creed

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

Because he has 'Where Is My Mind?' by the Pixies on his profile, and we *love* that song. And all Boosh fans are good in our book.

Mo Koon

ABOUT HIM

"Hi. I'm Mike, or HOTH5NIPER to the gaming world."

INTERESTS

"I like computers and Star Wars, and if you judge me on that I couldn't care less. I like my PS3 and I'd like to meet a nice girl. Roll on Christmas! I like all music as long as it's not rap or MC."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Star Wars: Renegade Squadron

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

There's more Star Wars stuff on this guy's page than in George Lucas' entire brainbox. He likes Jar Jar Binks, though. Urgh.

Jack De La Mare

ABOUT HIM

"I would like to be a director. I'm making a Jurassic Park fan movie called Prime Survival."

INTERESTS

"Making movies, watching movies, Jurassic Park, gaming, NFL, music. My favourite films are Kicking And Screaming, Cheaper By The Dozen and Anchorman."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

The Simpsons Game

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We watched the trailer for Prime Survival and were impressed. Nice camerawork and strong direction – the next Spielberg? Maybe.

Aydam

ABOUT HIM

"I will always laugh when someone falls over."

MUSIC

"Jack Penate, The Pigeon Detectives, The Raconteurs, Jack Johnson, Arctic Monkeys, The Fratellis, Green Day, Foo Fighters, The Feeling, The Twang."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Assassin's Creed

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We laugh when people fall over. Sometimes we push people over just to laugh at them and film it on our mobile phones. Not really.

PonYcoRn

ABOUT HIM

"I used to drive a crap car, but now I have a sexy one from the '70s called an MGB. It smells of old!"

INTERESTS

"I like many things, from cheese to Johnny Catson. I study music management."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

FIFA 08, Call Of Duty 4

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We don't know who Johnny Catson is – nor does Google – but we like to imagine he's a suave cat wearing a monocle and a top hat.

Charleston

ABOUT HIM

"I play a bit of guitar, drums and some piano. I am in two bands; SuckerPunch and Dutch Husband."

STUFF

I watch a lot of telly, but Lost is the best show on the box. I also like live music shows. I like Terry Pratchett's Discworld books, and anything by Douglas Adams."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guitar Hero 3

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

He is the music man, and he can play. He can play the piano. Pee-an-oh, pee-an-oh. And the guitar. Gee-tar-oh, gee-tar-oh. Oh, sorry.

Rumation

ABOUT HIM

"I like drinking, computers and food that would kill you."

INTERESTS

"I like hanging around with band members after gigs. Not as a groupie, but as a bloke who appreciates what a band does. It's nice when bands take the time to do that."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Guitar Hero 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We're interested in this dangerous food. Arsenic doughnuts? Ham and mustard gas sandwiches? A jam sponge with a bomb in it?

Petty Crimes

ABOUT HIM

"My persona is a dark cavern filled with treasures you'll never be able to comprehend. Here be beasts."

WOULD LIKE TO MEET

"Peter Cook, Batman (so that he might train me), Bill Bailey and Faye Valentine."

CURRENTLY PLAYING

Silent Hill 2

WHY WE MADE HIM TOP 8

We're intrigued by his dark, enigmatic mind and what it contains. Plus we had fun reading his mad fluorescent blogs.

MySpace Want to make our Top Eight? Go to www.myspace.com/psm3 and send us a friend request. We'll welcome you onboard the spunk.

You What?

I vote we rename the PS3 the DS3 – the DelayStation 3.
Trishul, email

'Chortle'.
Delicious, MySpace

I'm gonna laugh at my mates when they get 40Gb PS3s because they are scum.
Shane, MySpace

That's no way to talk about your friends. Just finished *Assassin's Creed*. What a rubbish and weird ending.

Yeah, it's not the best. And so obviously opens the game up for a sequel. Oh well.

What are the chances of *World Of Warcraft* coming out on PS3?
Doddsy, email

It will never come out; or so said Blizzard at the press conference for their merger with Activision. Boo!

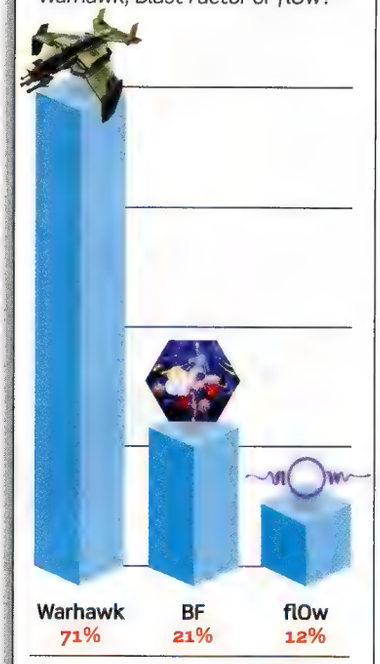
What do you think the *Bee Movie* game will be like?
Jord, email

Not very good at all, we imagine. Although it'll have Jerry Seinfeld in it playing a bee, which should give it a few extra points in the review. Well, maybe.

Poll Position

We ask. You answer

This Month Best PSN game: *Warhawk*, *Blast Factor* or *flOw*?



Next Month Best fighter: *Tekken*, *Virtua Fighter* or *Soul Calibur*?

Cast your vote by emailing psm3@futurenet.co.uk

help you a bit. I made you some notes on how to do a few tricks.
Shama, Norwich

Thanks for the tips, Shama – they do actually look quite useful – but Andy won't be setting foot on a skateboard ever again after falling off during his first practice session and spraining his ankle, leaving him house-bound for a week.

Skate arrival This shirtless twit makes skating look easy.

House call

I've been thinking a lot about *Home*, and how amazing it has the potential to be. It's good that everyone will be able to have their own house, but it would be even better if all the houses were on a huge virtual street, and you could wander around visiting strangers and chatting to people.

You could even buy a car and drive around. Obviously it would be massively big, but Sony could split the homes into 'streets' – maybe themed on Sony games, like Helghan from *Killzone* or Metropolis from *Ratchet & Clank*. As more and more PS3 owners get Home, the streets could become a country, the even an entire continent, which you could fly around in a plane. This may seem like a mad fantasy, but I think soon it will be a reality. It would be an entire world within the PlayStation Network, and the future of online gaming and interaction.

Although there would be the problem of a 'class' system – richer people being able to buy bigger, better houses. In this respect it would mirror real life, and real life problems would develop. The solution? Make it free, like PC game *Second Life*. You can pay for certain things, but most of everything costs nothing and you can live anywhere you like in the virtual world.

But the bad thing is, Sony are quite protective of their content, and they would be worried of people running riot and filling the world with anti-Sony things, or stuff that will offend people. But it's a dream, and something that already exists, in primitive form, on PC.
Cole Alexander, email

Brilliant – let's make *another* world riven by capitalism and class divides. Well, seriously, *Home* could be great, but the world you describe exists on PC already – the 'game' *Second Life*, which has its own working, real-life economy – so the technology is there. Sony, be warned. We don't want to buy virtual houses with real cash, but earn them by being good at games. *Home* should be a democracy, not a multi-tier sham.

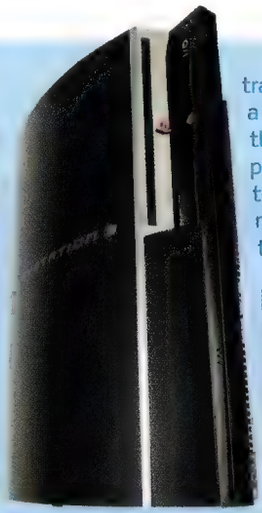
Tech Ken

Live from his retirement home, ex-Sony guru Ken Kutaragi answers your tech questions

Dear Ken

I have an American PS3 and I'm trying to connect it to my DV camera to record videos for YouTube, but the signal won't come through. It's not the equipment's fault or the wires because I can record from my PS2 no problem. Is it because the signal is different or something?
Wilbur, email

"Aye, that's yer problem, lad. What ye'll be needing here is summat called a 'scan converter'. This magical bloomin' box takes one o' them NTSC signals and magically transmorgamifies it to a PAL one. Thing is though, they're well pricey, and quite hard to get hold of from regular shops. Check t'internet or wotnot."



Dear Ken

Does any mouse and keyboard work with PS3 or do I have to buy an official Sony one? Also, does this apply for USB headsets, too?
James Pike, email

"Reet, ye can use any USB 2.0 keyboard or mouse with PS3. The brand doesn't matter - and Sony haven't bothered releasing one anyway. I tell thee, this would never have happened on my watch. And as for headsets, there's a few that don't work, so do some searching on Google before you buy. Or just get the excellent *Warhawk* one, bundled with the Blu-ray version of the game."

Dear Ken

Can I use a mouse and keyboard with *Oblivion* on PS3?
James Sweetman, email

"No, sonny Jim, ye bloody well cannot. Only a few game support them at all, mostly shoot-'em-ups."

Key master Any USB keyboard will work with PS3, even Apple ones. Good for online insults.

Got a question? Email it to psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject 'Ken'.

"The state of the PS Store is an absolute disgrace!"
Donovan Parfett email

Max Payne
The NY cop is still as tough as ever

I'm a massive fan of action films, especially Hong Kong action films like Hard Boiled. And this is my dream game! The developers obviously know a lot about this type of film and have made a homage to it in *Max Payne*. You are a hard-boiled cop who has lost his family, and you're out on the streets of New York trying to get revenge on the animals who killed her. This was one of the first games to do 'bullet-time' and it's still as satisfying now as it was then. Jumping through the air filling enemies with lead, watching individual bullets hit them and blood splash everywhere is an amazing thrill. The only bad thing about the game is how short it is, and how difficult the dream sequence bits are where you have to walk across a thin trail of blood. Rubbish. **Rob Toyne**

89

PSM3
You were so right!
Reader love

"God, the motion-sensing sucks! This game is a real disaster"
Xesmub, email

Lair

We said "Lord Of The Rings meets *Reign Of Fire*. And explodes. A disappointment."
PSM93 | Duncan Harris | 54%

"This is a really exciting, cinematic game – you guys are wrong about it"
Doffster, email

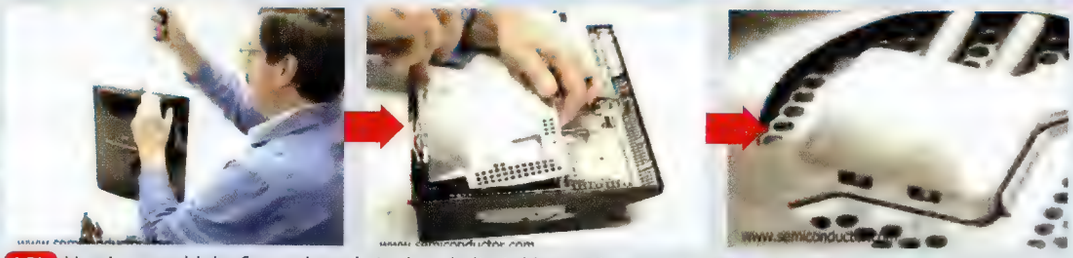
PSM3
You were so wrong!

YouTube The Video Zone
Out there gamer vids from the cyberdepths

Original *Ico* by xenogigas

ACE Before Sony's arthouse adventure *Ico* became a PS2 game, it was originally on PSone. And here's what it looked like. Pretty good, eh? Although the cut-scenes are showing their age a bit. http://tinyurl.com/2h72sl

PS3 'teardown' by Semiconductor



LOL Here's some bloke from a beardy tech website taking a PS3 apart. Watch as he strips it bare and the camera zooms into its naughty bits. It's like porn. Incredibly specialist porn. http://tinyurl.com/29n2ct

Smash my PSone by morosn

YAY Here's a boy smashing his PSone up with a hammer. It doesn't quite have the impact of the infamous 'Smash my PS3' videos, but at least he gave it a shot, eh? http://tinyurl.com/28nunn

Larry's 'hairy' moment by ADVripper

ODD We'd explain what's going on here, but, er, we can't. This is one of the maddest, most disturbing scenes from *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude*, a game so bad, it's good. No, really. http://tinyurl.com/26xubs

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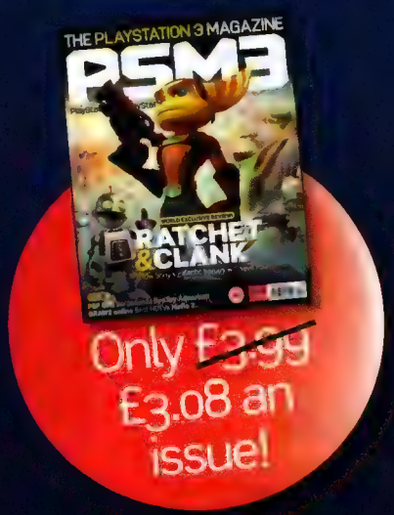

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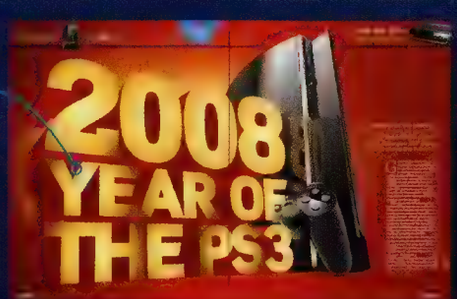

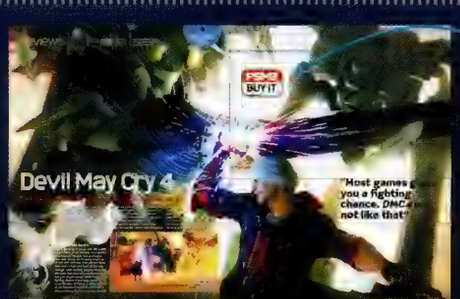

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PSM3 Reviews

Instant PlayStation justice

56 Unreal Tournament 3

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"They say to treat it as a racing game, but the execution betrays all"

The Club page 74

PSM3 review scoring system

0-29
Rubbish
An absolute stinker and an insult to gaming. The makers should be ashamed.

30-49
Poor
Why did they do that? Some simple playtesting could have worked wonders.

50-69
All right
Hey it works, and we can see what they were trying to do. And that's about it.

70-84
Good
Worth playing, especially if you're a fan of the genre. It just lacks that touch of greatness.

85-89
Superb
This is the sweet spot. If a game scores in this zone it's definitely worth your money.

90+
Amazing
You must get this. Failure to do so would mean missing out on a real console classic.

PSM3 BUY IT

The Award
If you see this, then you should buy that game.

The Team

The men who guide you towards the gaming wheat and away from the chaff

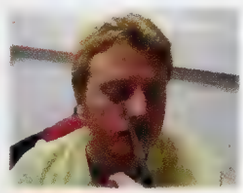
Daniel Dawkins
Specialist in Extreme sports, the windswept look *indoors*
Playing *Drake's:* "I'm after Vernon Kay's Family Fortune, n'all"

Nathan Irvine
Specialist in Sports games, hiding behind Saddam Hussein.
Playing *The Club:* "I like a lot of chocolate on my dictators."

Andy Kelly
Specialist in Role-playing games, having a frog in the throat.
Playing *Turok:* "Frogs are much better than dinosaurs, clearly."

David Cook
Specialist in Shooters, being too lazy to bother to shave.
Playing *Burnout:* "It's another day for you and me in Paradise."

Joel Snape
Specialist in Beat-'em-ups, spectacularly late Santa photos.
Playing *DMC4:* "Ho ho ho... what? It's January? Oh, fu- *fumbles.*"



Dave Meikleham
Specialist in Shooters, DIY-surgery nose jobs.
Playing *Soldier Of Fortune:* "War makes a man do strange things..."

Disagree with our reviews? Email your outraged rant to **psm3@futurenet.co.uk**

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ON THE DISC
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Unreal Tournament 3

IMPORT

An FPS legend finds a new home on PS3

When it comes to first-person shooters, there's a definite difference between us and PC gamers. While they squat saucer-eyed at their desks, brains whirring at goomph, crosshairs sparking across the screen with anxious flicks of a mouse, we prefer to lean back in our couches and soak up the atmosphere and story. And it's this difference that makes *Unreal Tournament*'s appearance on PS3 feel slightly jarring. After our first go we genuinely felt sick. It was way too fast, much too noisy and there was just too much going on at once. But when we eventually got used to it – adjusting our brains and senses to cope with the relentless parade of chaos – we grew to love it.

So, what is it? It's an FPS, but one that's focused almost entirely on multi-player. There are no levels, no keycards, no explosive barrels – nothing you'd normally associate with FPSs. Instead, each 'level' is an arena and your objectives are open-ended and team-based. Rather than fight against enemies, your adversaries are either AI-controlled bots or other human beings. If you've never played a game like this before, the lack of focus and tangible rewards – cut-scenes, story advancement, the things we're used to on PS3 – can be frustrating. But it doesn't take long

"After our first go we felt sick. It was way too fast"

PSM3 BUY IT

KNOW IT NOW

- Portable nuclear missiles?
- Giant robot octopuses?
- Sixaxis-based Hoverboard tricks?
- A proper campaign mode?

Walk away Storming into battle with a Darkwalker by your side makes you feel unstoppable.

Laser bones If we'd been two steps to the right this Darkwalker's laser would have vaporised us in half an instant. Luckily for us its weapons are slow and inaccurate.

Walk and cheese While they're distracted, take them down with triple-burst rocket fire.

to get used to it, and when you realise just how much there is to do, the lack of traditional single-player FPS staples doesn't bother you at all.

Ban solo

The single-player mode claims to be a 'campaign', but it's really a sequence of multi-player-style matches tied together by a forgettable sci-fi plot and some (admittedly gorgeous) cut-scenes. Epic's promise of an 'in-depth storyline' has turned out to be an enormous fib, but it's not all bad. The single-player mode is really an elaborate tutorial, and we actually suggest playing through it before setting foot online. It teaches you about the game's more complicated match types, such as Warfare, which sees two teams fighting for control of 'nodes' on a vast vehicle-packed map. If you've never played a *UT* game before, the help on offer in this mode is priceless. Don't pass it up.

Once you've mastered the basics, it's time to go online and start experimenting with *UT*'s inspired collection of vehicles and weapons. The guns are all brilliant, and all have two fire modes. There's the Flak

Getting around

The best vehicles: revealed

Unreal Tournament's best tools of destruction, and what they bring to the battle

Dark side Get control of this and you're unstoppable. Its laser is slow-moving, but kills the second it touches a player. They're easily destroyed by rocket fire, though.

Flying high The Necris equivalent of a fighter jet. It stalks through the air with robotic tentacles. Comes with a nerfed version of the Darkwalker's laser.

Tread carefully A big ruddy tank. As standard as military vehicles come. In one map you have to use one to reveal an enemy base's power core. They take quite a beating.

On the bend Slow, but heavily armoured and packing a high-velocity machine-gun. They're a nightmare to handle and topple over frequently. We don't like them.

Gun park A mobile weapons platform with room for five gunners. What it lacks in mobility it makes up for by having the toughest armour in the game.

Psycho mantis This hovercraft's ultra-fast and can nip in and out of Darkwalker beams with ease. Although don't expect it to last long under heavy fire.

Tanks a lot The Necris version of the Goliath. Creeps across the ground with bizarre tentacle-treads. It fires blasts of electric energy. Not your average tank.

Stealth bomber This thing can turn invisible, and it can drop – get this – cubes of jelly that slow down projectiles. It can drop hidden spider mines too. Deadly.

Velocity raptor A flying vehicle that can reach huge altitudes and drop missiles directly below it. Good for wiping out entire groups of players.

Big balls Like a daddy long legs, but with lasers attached to it. Press ◻ and it curls up into a ball and spins around the level. Weak, but heaps of fun.

Buggy Malone A fairly standard recon buggy, but with a nitro boost. If someone on a hoverboard's latched onto the back of one, they'll be propelled miles into the air.

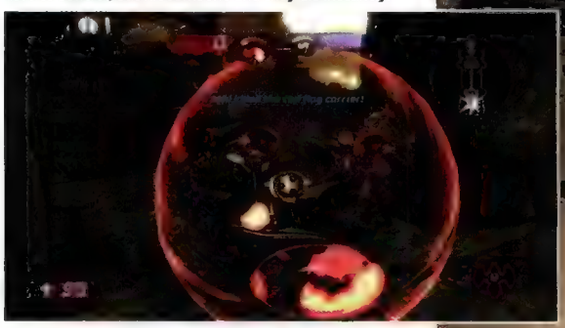
Viper's nest This bike's best feature is its self-destruct. Press ◻, leap off at the last second and send it towards a target. You can destroy a Darkwalker this way.

Customs house You can edit your character. It's pretty limited, but there are five races to choose from and loads of hats, masks, armour and shoulder pads.

Cannon, a beastly shotgun that fires wide bursts of glowing, red hot shrapnel at enemies. Its alternate fire lets you punt a flak 'grenade' into groups of enemies that explodes in a burst of shrapnel after a half-second delay. Then there's the Bio Rifle, with which you can lob globules of explosive radioactive ooze at your opponents. This one's alternate fire lets you charge up a pulsing great blob of the stuff and then leave it somewhere as a sort of bio-landmine.

Our favourite, though, is the Link Gun. With this you can fire a continuous stream of surging energy which flays the skin from enemies and leaves nothing but a bloodied skeleton behind. And better yet, if there are team members around you using the Link Gun, your weapons will link together and double in strength. It's basically genius – giving *Resistance*'s oddball arsenal a run for its money. But as well as regular weapons, you have access to two useful items; the Translocator and the Impact Hammer. These are available on all maps and have infinite ammo. The Impact Hammer is a melee weapon and, if you get close enough, can crush enemies into a bloody pulp with one shot. You can also use it to jump higher by pointing it at the floor, and can even deflect projectiles if your timing's good enough.

"It's an inspired set of vehicles and weapons"



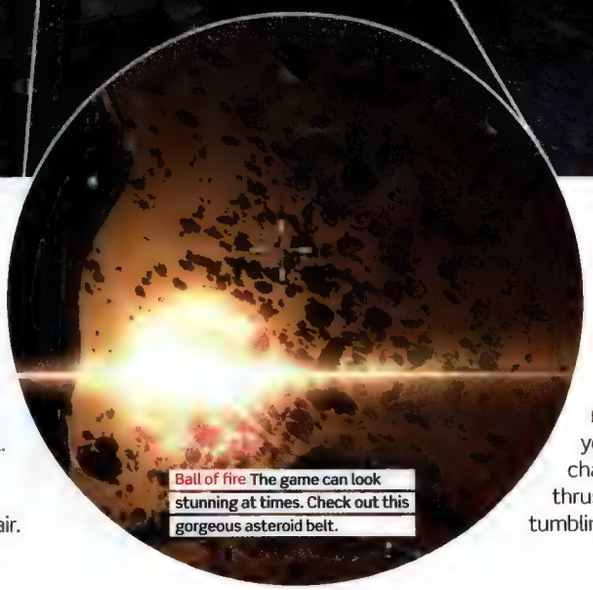
Ball or nothing Here's the Scavenger in 'ball' mode. It's hard to control, but hit someone and they die instantly.

Then there's the Translocator, which deserves its own paragraph because of how ruddy useful it can be. Fire it with R1 and a glowing disc will pop out. Then when you press L1 for alternate fire you're teleported to wherever the disc landed. This lets you reach high places, slip through shortcuts to the enemy flag in CTF and quickly leap out of harm's way. It's impressive how good the AI bots are with this; it's not rare to see one of them teleporting at rapid speeds through your base and nicking your flag.

The weapons and tools are so great in *UT*, we almost wish they were used in a proper single-player FPS instead of a multi-player arena game.

Cock of the Walker

The vehicles are awesome, too. There are 15 of them, some more interesting than others. There's an array of armoured trucks and tanks, but we've seen them in a million other games; what we're impressed by are the Necris vehicles. The Darkwalker, for instance, is absolutely *terrifying*. Looking like one of the tripods from War Of The Worlds, but with robotic octopus legs, seeing one clumping past, effortlessly vaporising player after player is *actually* scary. But then you get inside one and the tables turn; you can't help but cackle as you spread its laser beam across an enemy base teeming with terrifed players. Of course, it doesn't last long as the slow-moving walkers can be easily taken down with a few rockets, but that's the genius balance that makes it so much fun; dizzying power versus a weak, easily-shattered shell. Nobody's ever truly omnipotent on the *UT* battlefield, which keeps it fair.



Ball of fire The game can look stunning at times. Check out this gorgeous asteroid belt.

There's another Necris vehicle called a Scavenger that's like a scaled-down Darkwalker, but that scurries across the ground with its robotic legs like a spider and can roll up into a ball. Hurling yourself around in this is a chaotic laugh and you can thrust it up hillsides and come tumbling down, crushing anyone

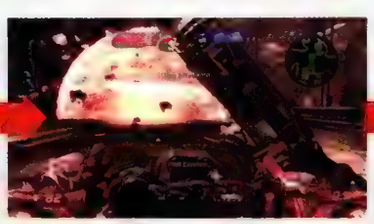
Super weapon

The mighty Redeemer

If someone gets their hands on this, *RUN*...

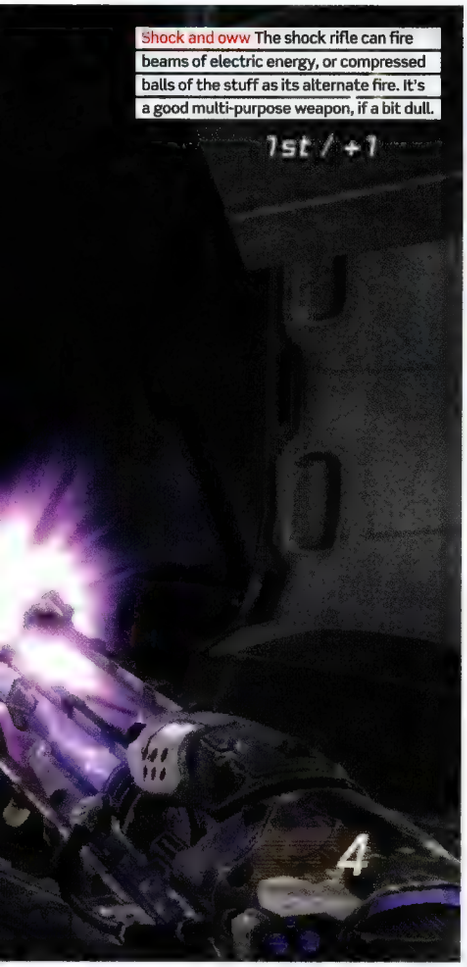
Step one The Redeemer is usually hidden somewhere. This one's underneath the bridge in Suspense, our favourite map in the game.

Step two Creep up on the enemy base and line up your shot. The missile is slow-moving, and if someone spots and shoots it, it fails to detonate.



Step three Boom. The explosion wipes out absolutely everything in the target area. In enemy bases, this can score you dozens of kills.

Step five The explosion will send you hurtling backwards, so be careful. You can guide the missile from a first-person camera too if you'd prefer.



Shock and oww The shock rifle can fire beams of electric energy, or compressed balls of the stuff as its alternate fire. It's a good multi-purpose weapon, if a bit dull.

Over board As mentioned in Back To The Future 2, *UT*'s hoverboards "don't work on water". Bummer.

below you. Of the 'human' vehicles the Leviathan is the best. It's a slow-moving weapons platform that can house an entire squad of players, all manning individual laser cannons. We'd describe the rest of the vehicles but that'd be boring, and it's better if you discover the benefits yourself.

Oh, and we mustn't forget the hoverboard. Press ◎ at any time and flip to a Back To The Future-style floating skateboard. Not only does this look incredibly cool, but it gets you across the battlefield faster *and* you can hook onto the back of passing vehicles for a speed boost. You can do tricks too, but that's purely for showing off. Imagine it, nicking an enemy flag and kickflipping away to victory. Badass. Although one shot and you fall off, dropping the flag. Not so badass.

Ace of pace

It's a deft combination of impeccable weapon design, unique vehicles and enormous, painfully-tested maps that makes *UT* feel so polished. For PS3 gamers it's an entirely new game, but it's actually the culmination of years and years of excruciating testing, fan feedback and tweaking on PC. If you've been playing, say, *CoD4* or *Warhawk* online, the pace of *UT3* will be absolutely bewildering. It's a game where you're constantly rotating your field of view, strafing and leaping about. The game modes are all viciously unpredictable, and you can lose control of the map a number of times, before slowly clawing your way back to being in control.

Wheels on fire

On the bigger maps there are ramps scattered throughout, letting you use smaller, nippier vehicles as makeshift weapons. The Scorpion's best for this because of its nifty boost ability.

Take the Flak The Flak Cannon is devastating up close; one blast of shrapnel and it's over for your opponent.

UT3 isn't accessible, but it is excellent. The Unreal engine looks stunning – a good sign, since it's used to power many third-party PS3 games – and despite mild texture pop-in, the frame-rate is unfalteringly slick. It isn't *quite* as fluid as the PC version – monitors have better refresh rates than TVs – but it's a stunner; arguably PS3's second big technical showpiece, next to the more colourful *Uncharted*. *UT3* is hard to get into and hard to get good at – like all online games, it depends on the people you're playing with. Just remember, this is an experience best shared with others online. **Andy Kelly**

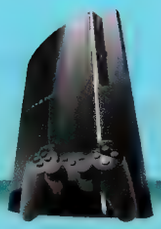
Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Unreal Tournament 3* contains...**
Burly men | AI insults | Robotic octopuses
Curling up into a ball and rolling around

Overall Not one for loners, but a technical tour de force – one of the sharpest shooters on PS3.

85



Pub EA | **Dev** Criterion
Price £50 | **Release** January 25
Multi-player 1-8

ON THE DISC

Burnout Paradise

The old game blazes a new trail, with barely a wrong turn on the way

KNOW IT NOW

- **The first free-roaming *Burnout*?** ☑
- **Breathtakingly exciting moments?** ☑
- **Loads of secrets to discover?** ☑
- **A 100% successful new direction?** ☒

You won't know what to think to begin with. The first thing that hits you is how sprawling *Paradise*'s map seems. (*Burnout*'s entered the free-roaming age, in case you didn't know.) Then you realise you can drive from one end to the other in only about four minutes, and around its entire circumference in about ten, and it's a little disheartening. But then you discover just how *dense* Paradise City is, how much there is to explore away from the main roads and all seems rosy.

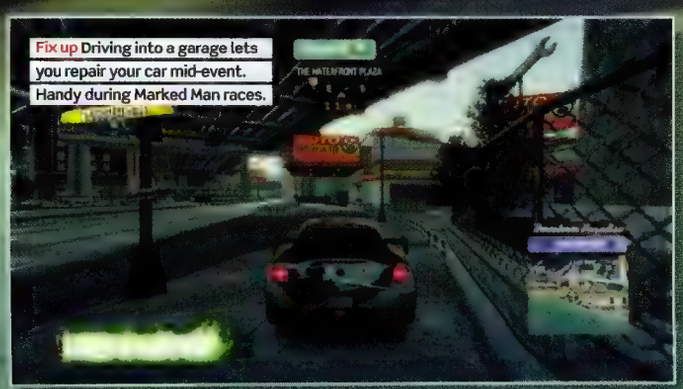
Except that, although 120 race events sounds like plenty, it isn't – we uncovered 97 of them within six hours, and although you can only take part in some events with certain cars, a dedicated gamer could polish off the bulk of the action in a couple of days.

But let's rewind a bit, and tell you what most hardcore *Burnout* fans really want to know – yes, it's *fast*. Hurtling along with your boost bar at top whack is a rush unsurpassed by any other driving game, and – hurrah – the frame-rate is *perfect*. If *Paradise* had fallen victim to the slowdown plague, like *PES* and *The Orange Box*, it would have killed the game stone dead. That it can look so beautiful, and shift so much around the screen so quickly (other cars, crash debris, palm trees, road sign, buildings, lakes, mountains – there's rarely a time when the scenery looks sparse), is cause for celebration. If this is what *Burnout* looks like in the early days of PS3's life cycle, when the machine is still wobbling along on

Burnout Paradise

"If you don't enjoy nailing a game 100%, you might have trouble"

PSM3 BUY IT



Fix up Driving into a garage lets you repair your car mid-event. Handy during Marked Man races.

stabilizers, we can't wait to see how the game looks a few years down the line.

Event management

But the new free-roaming structure won't be to everyone's taste – having all the events open from the beginning (OK, so you have to find them first – they're all at traffic lights; pull up and press L2 and R2 to begin) impacts negatively on your feelings of progression. You race, you win. So what? You don't unlock any new levels, you simply get a mark on your driving licence (i.e. you level up). This rewards you with new cars (there are 75 in total) whenever you go up a rank. This is all well and good, but new motors aren't as exciting a reward as new tracks or areas, as happened previously. And to actually get your new car, you've got to find it – it'll be driving around the city somewhere – ram it off the road, and then collect it from the junkyard. It's a process designed to artificially lengthen the game and can become a bit of a chore.

In fact, if you're not the sort of person who enjoys collecting every little thing in a game and nailing it 100%, you might have trouble in *Paradise*. Aware that the

Route planner

Welcome to Paradise City...

...the grass is green and there are no girls at all, but there's plenty else to see

Club a rub It's the country club. A *lot* of races (green dots – event types are colour-coded) end here.

Lake's fortune Ah, Silver Lake. There's not much here, really, but the sea views are most relaxing.

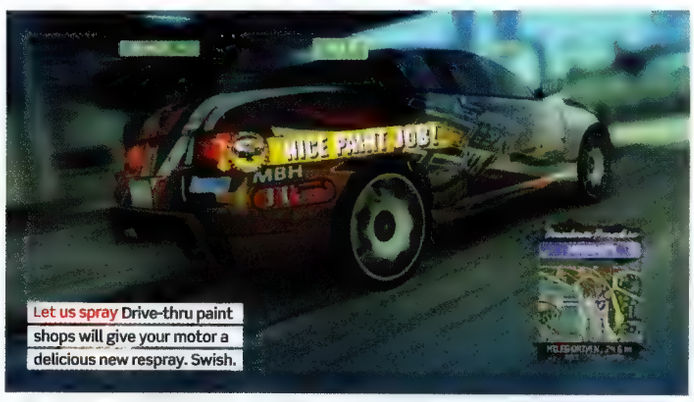
Ship of fuels The shipyard – rife with secret bits, including a brief sprint along the decks of a cargo ship. A few races and Marked Man events end up here.

free-roaming thing has muddied the game's focus, Criterion have injected *BP* with a stack of other objectives. There are *GTA*-style Super Jumps to find – 50, in fact – which you might discover at the top of a hill, say, or above a multi-story car park – and it's massively exciting when you're pelting down a road, spot a hidden alley out the corner of your eye, hit a ramp and soar skyward. There are 400 secret gates to break down and 120 *Burnout* billboards dotted about to find and smash through.

So if you adore playing games until they're drained, empty husks, *Paradise* is quite the proposition. If you don't, though, it's a tiny bit shallow. But complaining about *Burnout* lacking depth is missing the point magnificently – *Burnout* has always been about speed, mangled metal, heart-pumping near misses and sheer, outrageous fun. And *Paradise* is a *tremendous* example of all that.

Variety box

There's no lack of variety. Our favourite new mode is Marked Man, which tasks you to race to a checkpoint while a herd of computer cars gang up on you and try to ram you until your car is a write-off. Then there's Stunt Race, which baffles the first time you play because you won't have uncovered enough ramps and jumps to do stunts on and will fail dismally. Once you've found them, though, you can perform a satisfying array of leaps, slides and near-misses with the traffic and walls. Then there's the traditional Takedown offering, which feels meatier and heavier and more like, well, ten tons of traffic mangling together than ever before. There are 'Get from A to B in X seconds' challenges, and, of course, straight races. These can be problematic, mind, as the giant *Burnout*



Let us spray Drive-thru paint shops will give your motor a delicious new respray. Swish.

Burnout Paradise

"Oozes with confidence. Sucks you in and takes you over completely"

Palm blue ocean It's Palm Bay heights – a beach area full of beautiful scenery and lots of jumps and loads of hidden billboards – like this one. Smashy, smashy.

Stadium of plight The stadium – you'll be chased through this in one Marked Man event.

Race book Last, eh? The problem with races is there's no restart option. To begin them again, you have to drive all the way back – often to the other side of the map.

Jump to it The city is as rife with hidden jumps as the countryside. We didn't make this one. Ouch.

arrows herding you in the right direction are no more. Instead you've a map in the bottom-right of the screen and a compass that pings when you should change direction. But it's still easy to hare off the wrong way and keeping an eye on the map and the on-road chaos at the same time is... well, 'tough' doesn't even describe it. You get used to it, though, and as you learn the layout of Paradise City you'll rely on your compass and map less.

Brave new world

At its core, this is *Burnout* at its finest: it's the best-looking, it's got the widest range of cars, traffic-checking's been toned down so you can't just plough into anything that moves without fear. You can put your photo onto your licence with the PlayStation Eye, each individual road has its own Time Trial and Stunt modes... and it's got an *immense* soundtrack – Jane's Addiction? Guns 'N' Roses? (Guess which song.) Faith No More? Yes, please. Avril Lavigne's Girlfriend? Erm, if you insist. Oh, and there's the online game, with its promise to let you invite friends into your world via a couple of simple D-pad taps with no break in play. We've been unable to try it yet – full online test soon.

Star of the show Jab L1 and R1 to start Showtime Mode – which turns your car into a bouncing wreck – land on other motors for points. It's fun, but gets very old, very fast.

It's not perfect and it might not last some players long (although *CoD4* is only six hours in length, and we'd hardly recommend you shun that), but this latest *Burnout* oozes confidence. It sucks you in, distracts you from its faults and, for a while, takes over your world. Paradise? Not quite, but it's not far away. **David Cook**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Burnout Paradise* contains...**

A free-roaming map | Loads of hidden bits
Crash FM | Masses of cars | Avril Lavigne

Overall Flawed in structure but magnificent to play, *Paradise* is within touching distance of vital.

89

Pub Sony | **Dev** Polyphony Digital
Price ¥4,980/£22 | **Release** Out now (Japan)
Multi-player 1-16 players (online)

ON THE DISC
We'll review *GT5 Prologue* next time out

London calling It's nice to bomb around locations that we've been to, like this track set in London.

PSM3 BUY IT

Gran Turismo 5 Prologue

IMPORT

Ferraris, London streets and... Jeremy Clarkson? *GT* maintains its traction

KNOW IT NOW

- **In-cockpit camera view?** ☑
- **Race circuits new to *GT*?** ☑
- **Streaming motor world news?** ☑
- **Yellow-clad lollipop ladies?** ☒

Gran Turismo 5 Prologue is... well, you *know* what it is; a little capsule sent back to us from the future, which contains a milligram of each ingredient of 2008/2009's full blown *GT5*. And it's powerful stuff. Although Sony are charging close to full whack for *Prologue* in Japan (4,980 of your jangling yen – that's 22 of your English pounds, so it's only half-price compared to most UK PS3 titles), it can't really be described as a full game.

In the beginning...

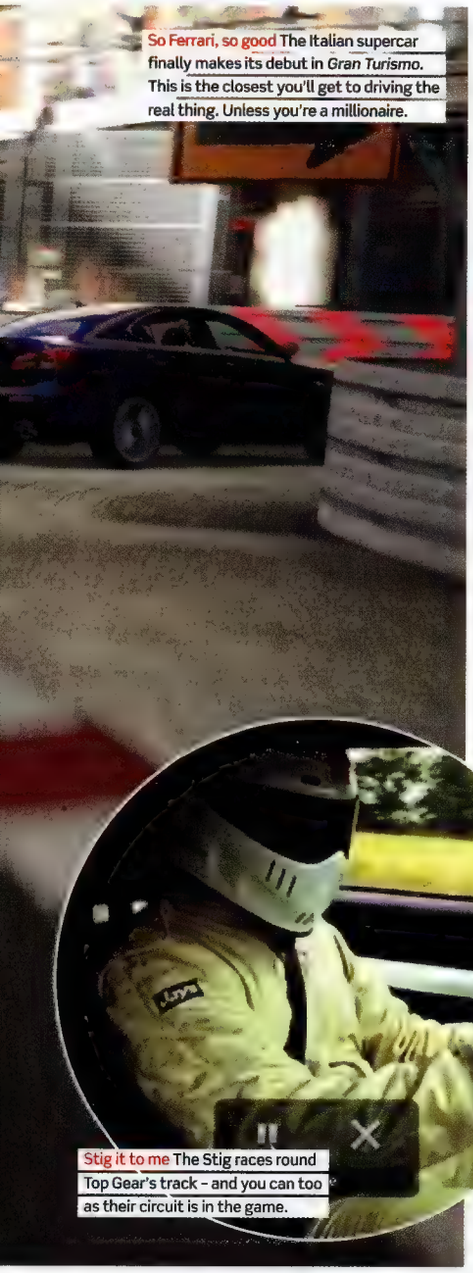
There are only five circuits in *Prologue*, but each of them has an 'alternate version' to fulfill Sony's slightly optimistic claim of ten tracks. Still, some kudos – the five locations are well chosen. The Daytona Super Speedway circuit is the most interesting addition to the *GT* mix, in spite of being an infinite oval – it's just nice to see *GT* do NASCAR, albeit without stock cars. The new London track is another fresh one, a narrow road course that takes in the sights of Chinatown and Soho while enabling the player to race without feeling bitter about the congestion charge. Eiger Nordwand returns, and looks identical to its appearance in *GT HD Concept*. And then there are two F1 circuits – Japan's Suzuka and Fuji Speedway – for the purists. A little tarmac for everyone, then.

And the cars? There are 40 vehicles, from 22 manufacturers, including – finally – Ferrari. Again, *Prologue* has a limited but well-balanced selection – hairdressers' cars (the Suzuki Cappuccino), rich Italians' cars (the Ferrari F430), and rich Italian hairdressers' cars (the Alfa Romeo Brera). There's also the new WRX Subaru Impreza hatchback, which we really want. And some Daihatsus, which no one wants.

Gran Turismo's biggest success has always been its absurdly precise driving mechanics – not merely the tracks or cars themselves. And that holds true in *Prologue*, which has car physics to impress the white coats off lab technicians. It feels scientifically good, like each car here – even the Daihatsu Copen – is a technological marvel, thousands of parts working

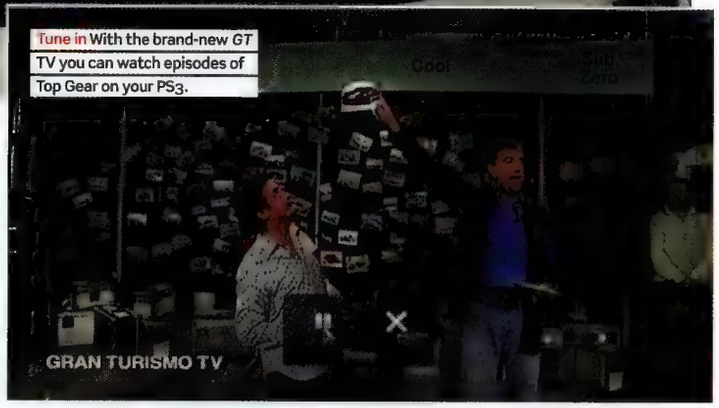
GT5 Prologue

"A stonking showcase for the HD era"



So Ferrari, so good The Italian supercar finally makes its debut in *Gran Turismo*. This is the closest you'll get to driving the real thing. Unless you're a millionaire.

Replay value The always awesome replays look even slicker thanks to PS3's power. Just check out the fine details in this lovely Nissan GTR. Amazing.



Tune in With the brand-new *GT* TV you can watch episodes of Top Gear on your PS3.

Stig it to me The Stig races round Top Gear's track – and you can too as their circuit is in the game.

together to get you from A to B in a hurry. Each motor has unique handling, and that's before you begin twiddling the knobs of *Prologue*'s options screens to find a balance between amateur accessibility and professional power to suit you.

Car porn

Prologue is a stonking HD showcase, running – almost – flawlessly in true 1080p. But be warned: occasionally, there's slowdown and screen-tearing when it tries too hard – notably when eight or more cars are simultaneously trundling around a hairpin – but 95% of the time it's honeymoon stuff. Polyphony Digital has clearly given the car models weeks of loving attention, and the tracks have been modelled with just as much passion. And though the cars and circuits here are meticulously carved out of reality, they don't look cold at all. There's something of the Ferrari spirit about *Prologue*'s presentation, which permeates even the jazzy menu screen.

Prologue makes some improvements to *GT*'s notoriously thick AI, so drivers now attempt to slipstream past you and sometimes make silly mistakes. There's still no car damage, but this could be implemented in a future download. And it's the online features of *Prologue* that give it potential beyond its initial use as a self-contained capsule, with 16-player online races and time trials to be supplemented by a My Page feature where you can show off your fastest times. Far from a cynical cash in, *Prologue* is a teasing glimpse of *GT*'s rich online potential. **Jonti Davies**

Smooth control

***GT* is best played with a DualShock 3 for its good vibrations – the Sixaxis, bless it, feels like the steering wheel of a Vauxhall when used with *Prologue*.**

Fave Feature

PSM3 Verdict

***Gran Turismo 5 Prologue* contains...**

Slipstream silence | The new Impreza
Jazzy menu music | Much promise for *GT5*

Overall Other racers are greater value for money, but this is an invaluable glimpse at *GT*'s future.

82

Pub Disney | **Dev** Propaganda
Price £39.99 | **Release** February 2
Multi-player 1 - 16

ON THE DISC
Watch *Turok* in hi-def action now

The big one

The T-Rex cometh...

Lara was blasting them years ago, but a T-Rex's presence is still intimidating...

1

For those about *Turok* It looks like he's grinning, but he's not – he wants to eat you, and if you're this close, he will.

2

He took a hunk He's invincible – even tossing a grenade down his neck doesn't stop him.

"Turok's bow fires barbed arrows at dizzying velocities"

3

Run and gun Your best bet is to avoid the beast altogether. Luckily, he's easily distracted by other, smaller dinosaurs...

Turok

Back with a sci-fi twist, but sporadically pre-historic

KNOW IT NOW

- Stabbing dinosaurs in the head? ☑
- Big burly space marines? ☑
- Loads of big, menacing dinosaurs? ☑
- A vast amount of original ideas? ☒

Were *Turok* any manlier it'd grow a moustache and punch you in the face. This is a game where the most common solution to a problem is stabbing it. The characters are all neckless, spitting testosterone buckets – think the cast of Aliens, but with bigger shoulders – and Turok himself is a burly, mohawk-sporting space marine who snaps dinosaurs' spines across his knee. Previous games in the series were exaggerated comic book adventures, but this is a bleak futuristic sci-fi that applies improbable 'scientific' explanations to everything that's happening. The dinosaurs, for instance, are the result of sped-up evolution on an alien planet. Yeah, right.

A man's game

But whatever – it's an FPS, obviously, but with a range of brutal third-person melee attacks to employ. Creep up on someone, jab R2 and a cut-scene will play showing Turok burying his giant knife in their face. Same goes for dinosaurs – get up close and squeeze the shoulder button to initiate a wildly theatrical melee attack, like the spine-snapping we mentioned earlier. Brilliantly, you can perform these moves on innocent, grazing herbivores. Because killing helpless animals is *manly*.

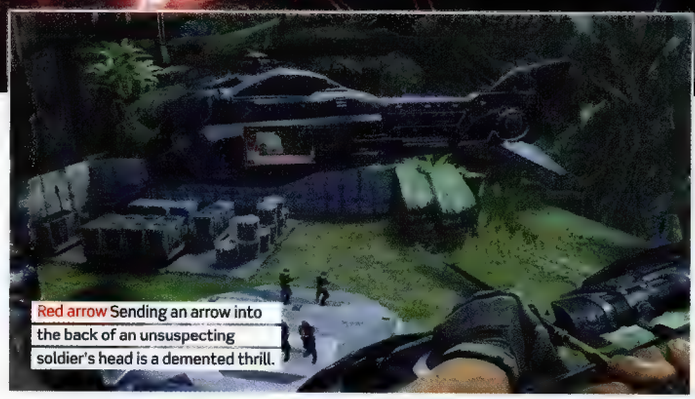
Ace of base These underground military base bits are the worst the game has to offer – they're so very, very dull.

Gloriously elaborate stabbings aside though, *Turok*'s combat just isn't that interesting. Because the human AI is so lacklustre, the levels quickly devolve into repetitive shooting galleries as you slowly shift between cover, killing enemy after enemy, never really feeling like you're being particularly tactical or imaginative. Set-pieces are few and far between, and some of the levels are nothing but tiresome networks of boring grey corridors. In one particularly cliched and infuriating scene you're stuck inside a slow-moving lift surrounded by enemies, and are forced to fend them off until you reach the top.

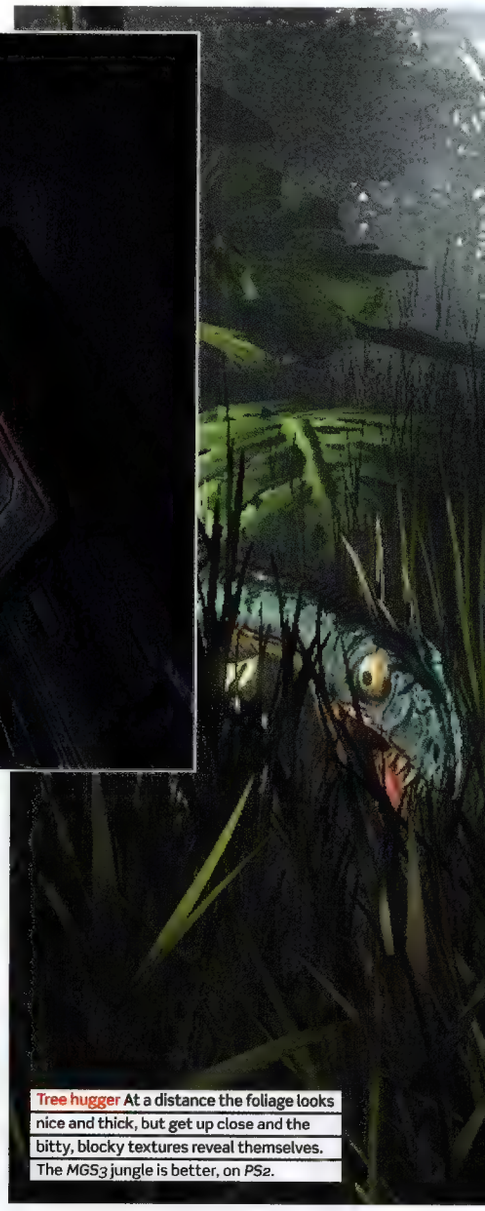
But it's Turok's bow that saves the combat. Think about bows and you imagine elves prancing through the forest, but Turok's is different – it's a shiny, platinum-coated monster that fires barbed arrows at dizzying velocities. If you fire it at an enemy's head or torso when they're next to a wall, they'll be pinned to it, wriggling as they gasp their last breaths. It's brilliantly sadistic, although it would have been nice to be able to retrieve spent arrows, like in *Oblivion*.

It's a shame the rest of the game's weapons are all so generic. *Turok 2* on N64 was famed for its clever weapons –

Egg on toast If you disturb a raptor's eggs they'll, understandably, get a bit miffed. Shoot them all and crush the eggs under your boot. Dirty reptile scum.



Red arrow Sending an arrow into the back of an unsuspecting soldier's head is a demented thrill.



Tree hugger At a distance the foliage looks nice and thick, but get up close and the bitty, blocky textures reveal themselves. The *MGS3* jungle is better, on *PS2*.

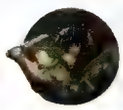
like the Cerebal Bore which carved into an enemy's brain and drained its spinal fluid – but no such luck in *Turok* – it's all machine guns and pistols. But you can dual-wield them, which is fun. Of course, not all the weapons are unoriginal – we like the thing that fires remote-detonated grenades – but after playing the likes of *Unreal 3* and *Resistance*, we're a bit underwhelmed.

Dino-phwoar

Still, the dinosaurs are awesome. The animation and textures are stunning, and their AI is convincingly primal. They'll fight amongst themselves, and work in packs to take down bigger foes. Fighting groups of raptors is genuinely terrifying; they skit around you, lunging at your back and knocking you off your feet. If one of them lands on top of you and you don't follow the on-screen button prompts, they chew your face off. Same goes for getting too close to a T-Rex's mouth.

Fave Feature

Stab happy



When a dinosaur gets on top of you, you have to bash the buttons furiously to knife it away. Fail and its jaws clamp around Turok's fat head and it's game over. This can be frustratingly difficult at times.

But as much time as you spend battering giant reptiles, you spend fighting Helghast knock-offs in underground military bases. While the creature AI makes for some exciting confrontations, the blokes are just *thick*. And you never really understand why you're fighting them, either. The narrative's a fractured mess peppered with confusing flashbacks, and it takes a while to grasp what the Hell's going on and why an army has set up a base on a dinosaur-infested

Scope for more Sometimes it's better just to hang back and snipe dinos. Less claw damage that way.

"The dinosaurs are awesome and their AI convincing"

Online

Multi-player stabbing

Get sneaky online with Turok's combat knife

We'll do a proper online review of *Turok* when the game's out and people are actually online playing it. For now, we'll say it looks very competent, and the way you see your character stabbing an opponent from a third-person camera is an excellent addition. They'll never expect it...

jungle planet.

The baffling story, dull human AI and ropey indoor level design dent *Turok's* otherwise decent atmosphere – a few pacing 'lifts' from *Half-Life 2* would've worked wonders. There are some decent set piece 'spikes' – the opening level sees you escaping from a crashed space vessel, which is deliciously tense, and your first foray into the reptile-infested jungle is eerie. You creep through the foliage catching brief glimpses of creatures, before reaching a stunning vista dotted with tree-munching diplodocus and pteradactyls. It's a real Jurassic Park moment. Things go a bit DNA-hybrid mental late on (Killer dino squids?), with some genuine shocks in the caves, plus a tense night time jungle section.

Soldier of misfortune These Helghast-alikes are staggeringly averagely designed. Sigh.

Run for it

Turok 'runs' slowly. Even if he's being chased down by a T-Rex, jaws slung with bloody slather, he'll prance along like a kid playing hopscotch. There's no run button and if a grenade lands near you, you'll almost never escape the blast.

It just doesn't feel as 'right' as, say, *CoD4*, despite solid mechanics. The aiming is weirdly slow and laboured. It lacks the slick precision of *CoD4* and battles feel like a little clumsy at times. And what's with the excessive recoil on the weapons? If you zoom in with the SMG and try and fire at someone, the screen shakes violently and is obscured by ejected shells.

In isolation, it's decent fun, but there are better shooters, with more ideas and superior level design. *Turok* is another case of a good game losing out to the competition. Multi-player online mode has a lot of potential, although we haven't had the chance to play it properly. There are moments of reptilian genius here, but as a package *Turok* doesn't feel as rewarding or as unique as its competitors. **Andy Kelly**

PSM3 Verdict

***Turok* contains...**

Exciting outdoor bits | Boring indoor bits
Lots and lots of knifing | Big muscly blokes

Overall A decent shooter, but fails to capture the series' classic feel due to a lack of fresh ideas.

71

PS3

Pub Sony | **Dev** Namco-Bandai
Price £50 | **Release** Out now
Multi-player 1-2

ON THE DISC
See *Time Crisis 4* on the disc this month
PS3/Extras

Shoot the gunners Every now and again you'll need to switch the camera left and right to gun down attacks from all angles. It's real easy though.

Time Crisis 4

Can someone please call time on this series?

Look, some retro revivals – like *SFIV* and, er... *Super SF2 HD Remix* – make us happy, but there's *no place* for lightgun games on PS3. Much as we like bright orange guns, we'd rather be playing *The Orange Box* (PSM96 90%) or *Call Of Duty 4* (PSM95 94%). For a few fleeting moments, *Time Crisis 4* stirs up fond memories of a mispent youth pumping coins into a fag-burnt arcade cabinet, but the disappointment sets in as you realise you're pointing a child's toy at your £1000 1080p HDTV and not having anywhere near enough fun to ignore your shame.

It's not just the 'last-gen' feel that makes *Time Crisis 4* so uninspiring. Firstly, there's the hardware: the Gun Con 3 – the bright orange lightgun you have to wield – feels like something you'd win on a fairground, and it's covered in buttons that are rarely used. And it isn't wireless either, so you'll be dragging cables to your seating position and tripping up the cat again.

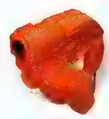
It's a fair cop(ter) The chopper battle through the city is a rare highlight in a boring game.

Block party

Worse, the game looks like a PS2 throwback. Blocky soldiers fling themselves out from behind bland, immovable objects as you glide along on-rails through monotonous environments; springing from cover with B1 (on the aforementioned Gun Con 3) and clicking the trigger to shoot. This repetitive action is punctuated by fiddly sections where you use the Gun Con 3's analogue stick to flip to different sides as soldiers try to ambush you, but even these grate.

To be fair, the story was never going to be compelling, but *Time Crisis 4*'s plot is ludicrously, and resoundingly, crap. You (playing as either Giorgio or Evan) fight to discover who these nasty terrorists are while blasting Terror Bites; a new biological weapon that has been placed in *beetles and mosquitos*. Spare us.

Eat lead



You get four base weapons you can switch between when hiding: a pistol, machine gun, shotgun and a grenade-launcher.

Knife to see you The FPS mode is incredibly shoddy and the developers should never have bothered with it.

Namco-Bandai have even had a bash at a traditional FPS mode. Use the Sixaxis and you can run about the place in special missions as Captain Rush, but this is no more compelling than the lightgun mode – it's just as clunky as the on-rails stuff, except you get a knife and a few other incidental things to create this illusion of refreshment. It's sad that such a classic arcade game has had its history sullied by this tedious, if polygon-perfect, 'next-gen' port – this is one series that should never have appeared on PS3. **Nathan Irvine**

PSM3 Verdict

***Time Crisis 4* contains...**
On-rails shooting | Deadly insects
Terrible plot | An orange gun

Overall It has a certain nostalgia, but this fails to entertain long enough to demand a purchase.

43

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PlayStation 2 OFFICIAL MAGAZINE UK

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2008 PREVIEW SPECIAL

THE ART OF GOD OF WAR

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PlayStation 2
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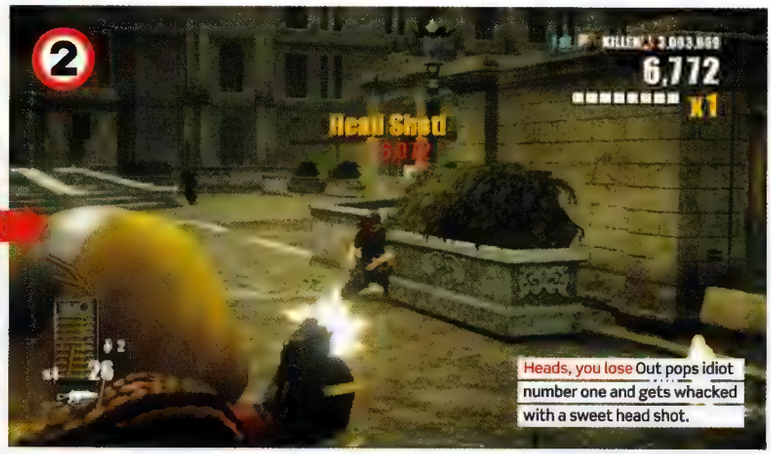
ALONE IN THE DARK
HANDS-ON WITH THE SCARIEST GAME OF 2008

THE UK'S ONLY PS2 MAG!

On-sale 3rd January

Pub Sega | **Dev** Bizarre Creations
Price £40 | **Release** February
Multi-player 1-16

ON THE DISC
Watch *The Club* on this month's disc
PS3/Coming Soon



The Club

Membership will cost you an arm and leg. And possibly your life...

KNOW IT NOW

- **Intense killing sprees with lots of death?** ☑
- **A gang of men with a thirst for blood?** ☑
- **A combo system for creative carnage?** ☑
- **Women, a decent plot, much diversity?** ☒

A few months ago, *The Club* looked a mess – a great idea (a shooter that plays like a driving game, focusing on speed and *Tony Hawk*-style score chasing) buried under confusing gameplay and mediocre visuals. And the sad news is, despite some radical tightening and a graphical overhaul, the more time we spend with Sega's ambitious run-and-gun shooter, the more we're starting to feel our first impressions were correct.

We don't mind *The Club*'s vaguely ridiculous premise; –a shady organisation that holds bloodthirsty tournaments for select members, which take place in abandoned English manors, rusty old ships and even in the middle of a military conflict. But no matter which setting you engage in, the action is always the same. And this is where the problems start.

There are various modes, (more on these later) but your ultimate goal is always to grab the highest score, which you do by chaining kills before your combo meter drains. To achieve this, you have to blast the chumps that pop out from behind scenery – in a way not too dissimilar to the training level at the beginning of *CoD4*. Take down three blokes consecutively and you'll get a x3 bonus for your next kill points, nail a fourth and you'll get a x4 bonus, and so on. It's a simple formula, and you can memorise where to point your gun when playing a level for the second time. This doesn't do *The Club* any favours in terms of repetition, though. And sadly, the AI is dumber than a Jade Goody with a lobotomy – they might be armed with the weediest of pistols, but they'll charge out even if you're carrying, say, a minigun.

"The simple formula kneecaps *The Club*'s diversity level"

one that's instantly entertaining – but it kneecaps *The Club*'s diversity level; this is how the game plays from start to finish.

Memory test

To encourage high-scoring in each stage, bad guys pop up in the same sequence so

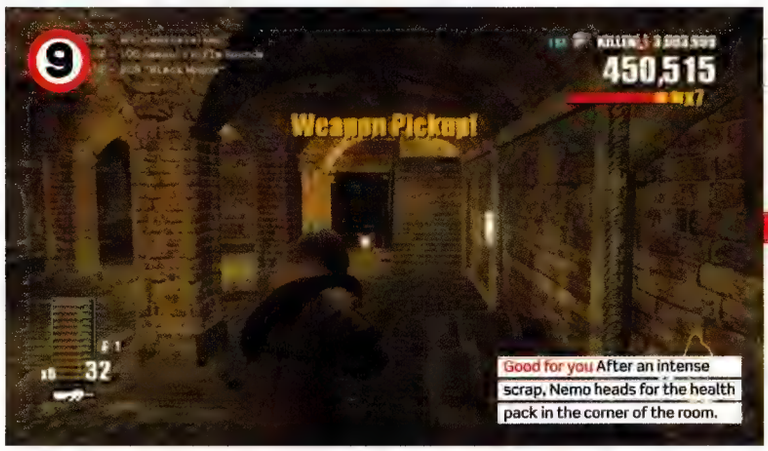
But you're nicely rewarded for being creative with your kills. Perform a forward somersault (⊗) and then shoot a man (R2) and you'll get a Death Roll bonus. Boot a door off its hinges and blast everyone inside the room and you'll get the Gate Crasher

Ammo amour After a quick ammo pick-up Nemo makes his way into the large estate.

Knock, knock The door is blown to bits by force meaning there's some bad guys inside. Obviously.

Smashing time Nemo wastes no time in bursting through the next gate, literally using his head.

Crashing out Instantly taking down the bloke inside, Nemo earns the Gate Crasher bonus.



Good for you After an intense scrap, Nemo heads for the health pack in the corner of the room.

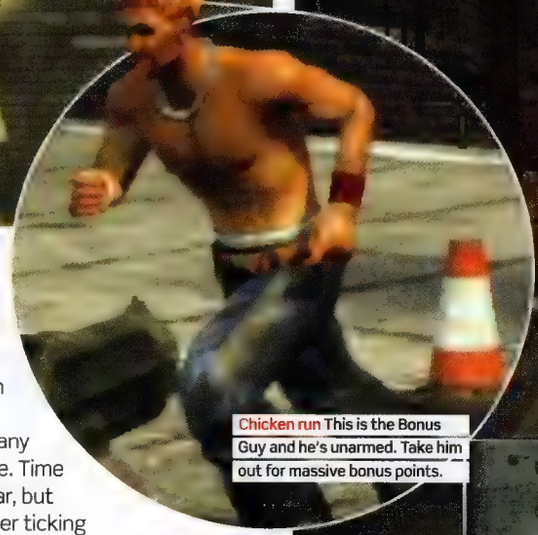
Low blow With ammo resources running low, every shot has to count – like this one.

Sign of the times Blasting one of these skull signs allows Nemo to carry on his combo of kills.

Exit wounds Still being shot at, Nemo makes a break for freedom. Then it's all over – until next time.

Back shot The Bonus Guy cops it with a well aimed bullet. He only pops up every now and again, but he'll give you massive points if you can kill him.

Finn-ish him This suited fella is Finn, and although he may look different to the other players he plays almost identically. And his story is so vanilla.



Chicken run This is the Bonus Guy and he's unarmed. Take him out for massive bonus points.

bonus, and there's even some kudos points for a Rico-slay (read: ricochet), where a bullet bounces off a surface and into a target. But these aren't integral to the action, and should have been expanded on – this might have created more excitement and variety. Games like *Chili Con Carnage* and *Stranglehold* already do this sort of combo system better – without focusing the entire game around it – plus they've got superior plots and gravity-defying acrobatics. The Club just has you killing men for sport; a sport you're not entirely sure why you entered.

Racing up to the facts

On more than one occasion we've been told to treat *The Club* as a racing game, but the execution betrays the concept. True, you can bomb around levels without hiding behind cover – once you recalibrate your brain for such high-speed shooting – but it doesn't feel like a racing game. Further evidence of this is the fact that, even though there's a timer for most matches, your lap times aren't recorded –meaning you don't get any related bonuses at the end.

Block and load Some enemies have shields, but you can shoot through the glass to end them.

Gun play
You can create your own tournaments in Gun Play mode. Choose what match type you want, the venue and weapons, then pass the pad to a mate and compete against each other in your own unique set-up.

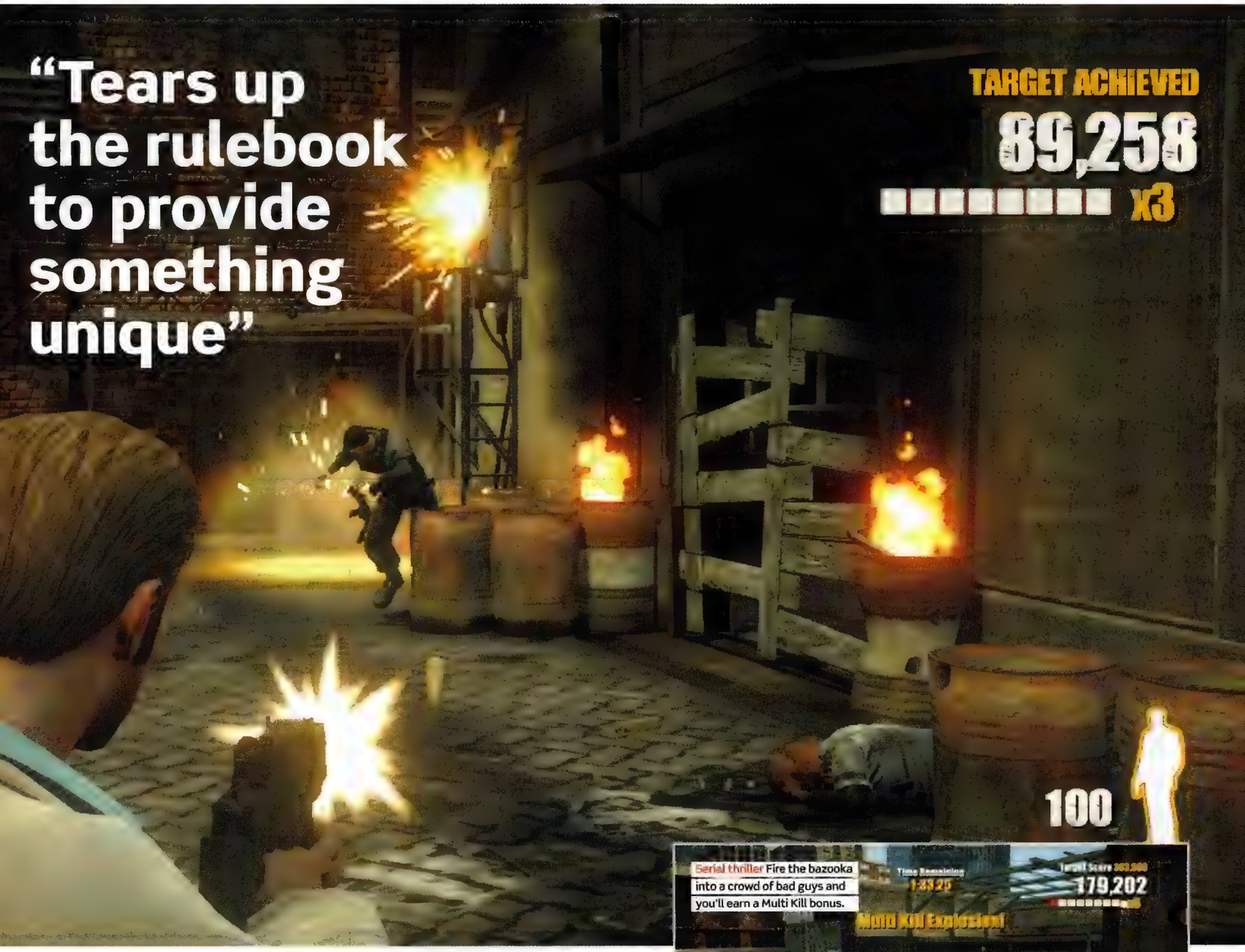
Levels are split into five modes. Sprint sees you legging it to an exit while grabbing as many kills as possible. Time Attack is similar, but you have a timer ticking down too, and Run The Gauntlet is where the toughest blokes are stationed around the level to provide a harder route.

The two modes that aren't about running are Siege and Survivor – two identical options that task you to survive in one area until the timer hits zero. Step outside the marked zone and a micro-explosive implanted in your head – a device placed in all members – will explode after five seconds and kill you. This means desperately fending off enemies in a claustrophobic environment and trying desperately not to die. This is far more difficult than it sounds, and is one of the rare moments in *The Club* where you get a sense of achievement following victory.

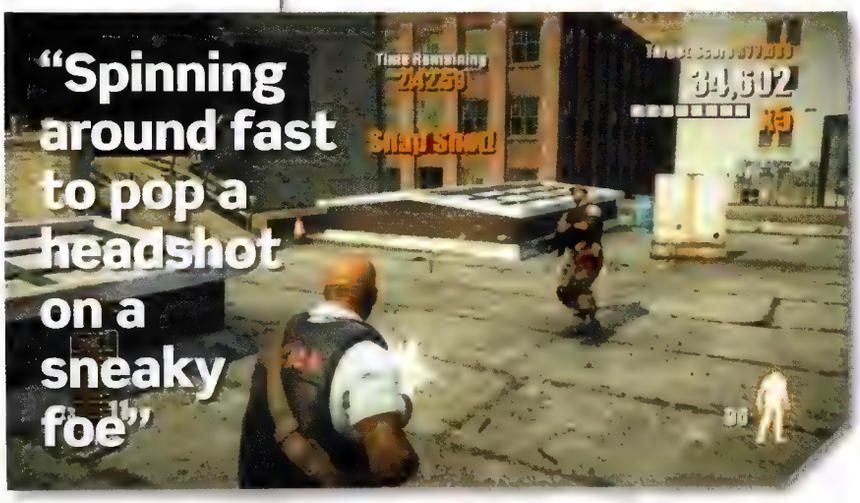
Character assassination

We're not convinced by the array of characters either. The eight main folk are well designed, from Renwick the no-nonsense cop to Nemo a squat little fella who wears his hood up for added 'mystery', but they all feel exactly the same – although some are *slightly* quicker or more durable than others. And then there are the woeful stories. We ploughed through the entire game with Finn – a Don Johnson lookalike, who entered the tournament to pay off his gambling debts. As the outro movie rolled we sat in anticipation for the payoff to all our hard work, only to be presented with a 30-second movie of Finn triggering some C4 he'd 'cleverly' sent to his loan sharks as a present. Embarrassing. It's a bit like the end sequences of *Tekken*, but without the all-important satisfying finale to the stories.

Ultimately, *The Club* is pretty ballsy, and tears up the shooters' rule book to provide something unique. The arcade-style blasting is instantly fun and it looks and feels meaty, but the enjoyment quickly wears thin due to a lack of variety. You'll go back to beat high scores and climb the online leaderboard – and we're kind of excited to see how the rest of the online multi-player works (Extended Play online review soon – but with such a lack of unlockable weapons, characters and venues, *The Club* struggles to keep its members entertained. **Nathan Irvine**



Fave Feature



PSM3 Verdict

***The Club* contains...**
Racing | Unique bullet kills | Lots and lots of killing | Lots and lots of repetition

Overall Perfect if you're after a no-brainer – just don't expect the novelty to last long.

72

Blown away Every appendage you can think of can be shot off with *SoF*'s guns. Anyone lend a hand?

Activison | PS3 | Out Now

Soldier Of Fortune: Payback

Fortune favours the decapitated

I thought *Jericho* was the most gory and unpleasant game on PS3? Think again. *SoF* makes it look like *The Olsen Twins Pony Ride Adventures*. If your average FPS headshot makes your stomach churn, this will make you pass out. In *SoF*, fired bullets and lobbed grenades are always followed by severed appendages and more blood than a buffet of black pudding.

Gore power

Don't get us wrong, for the first couple of levels *Payback*'s deaths will leave you chuckling in quasi-guilty mirth. Highlights include blowing arms out of their sockets, grenades that blow terrorists up like exploding piñatas and making enemies dance, Goodfellas style, by shooting at their legs. Perfect for recreating those Joe Pesci psychotic fantasies.

The trouble is, once the appeal of the game's gore runs out, and it quickly will, then you're left with a distinctly average FPS. There's nothing here that has been done in *Call Of Duty 4* at least twice as well, and it looks like a hi-res PS2 game. The weapons are satisfying, though – each feels suitably substantial and weighty. And the methodical nature, which feels a bit like *CoD*, may appeal to some. But a generic plot and sluggish reload animations more painful than blown off shins, mean no amount of butchered limbs can save *Payback* from distinct mediocrity. **Dave Meikleham**

PSM3 Verdict

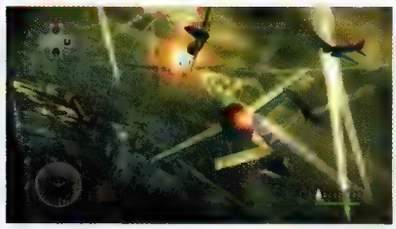
Ignore the gore and this is an average shooter. **62**

Guns for hire Certain weapons can be dual-wielded, which means you can decapitate twice as fast.

Ubi Soft | PS3 | Out now

Blazing Angels 2

A flight to remember



***Blazing Angels 2*, the sequel** to the so-so WW2 flight game, celebrates the release of the rumbling DualShock 3 pad (due in the UK in March) with enough vibration to make your bones quake. The sensation of revving the engine and feeling your propeller blades cut through the air is so tangible, it's almost worth importing a rumble pad for. Almost.

The flight action itself is pleasing. Thanks to the sensation of weight and gravity, you really feel you're in control of a powerful, graceful and sometimes unpredictable machine. It makes a refreshing change from the number of flight sims that feel like you're driving a car through the sky, rather than piloting a plane.

The action isn't particularly varied, though, and mostly you'll just be shooting down Nazis and flying through obstacles. And the frame-rate can get seriously choppy during dogfights. But the joy of flight is such a simple and lasting pleasure that it redeems these flaws. If you've got even a passing interest in aircraft this is definitely worth a look. **Dave Meikleham** **70**

Sony | PS3 | Out now

NBA 2008

Bog-standard baller fails to convince

Not to be confused with EA's *NBA Live* series, Sony's effort delivers a lower key, less flashy and ultimately less fun b-ball title.

Offensive play is especially tough in *NBA 08*, and without the free, manual dribbling of *Live*, making space and scoring baskets can be a real headache. For newcomers the amount of rules and fouls you'll give away makes it almost completely incomprehensible – if you're baffled by the offside rule in footie this will make you feel as useless as a five-foot centre.

Defensive play is equally frustrating, with jabs of ⓡ almost always penalised for reaching. The computer is absolutely ruthless at making baskets too, so be prepared to feel like a bystander for the majority of matches. Players who persist long enough to learn the mechanics will find a solid game of b-ball, with impressive licensing and some interesting Sixaxis controls – tilting the pad up and down raises your players arms accordingly. But EA's more accessible and exciting *Live* is the team that makes the play-offs this year. **Dave Meikleham** **61**

Atari | PS2 | Out now

Asterix At The Olympic Games

Do we *have* to let these games begin?

This isn't a sports sim. No, imagine *Lego Star Wars*, but replace all those plastic Jedi with a couple of Gauls with wonky cockney accents. Like the Traveller's Tales titles, you press L1 to switch between characters to solve puzzles. Asterix, being small, can fit into tight spots to activate switches. Meanwhile, Obelix, being fat, is good at fighting Romans.

The fighting system is similar to *God Of War*, only instead of an indestructible Spartan, you've got a couple of ginger blokes with dodgy taches. It's diverting at first, particularly swinging Romans above your head with Ⓐ, but proves too basic, and quickly becomes repetitive. The puzzles fair better. And working with your two characters to solve platforming and switch puzzles is quite satisfying. Again, though, it's repetitive – it's almost always a switch puzzle – and the muddy platforming mechanics let the game down. **Dave Meikleham** **54**

Irem | PSP | Out now (Japan)

R-Type Tactics

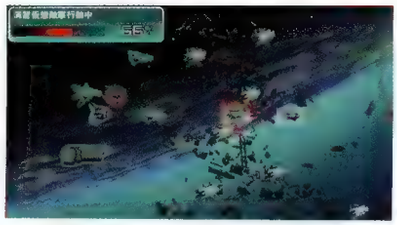
IMPORT

Back from the dead...

Technically, they weren't lying when they called the last game *R-Type Final*. This apparent sequel might look and scroll like a conventional shoot-em-up, but really it's a universe apart. A turn-based strategy shooter, it's a test of mind rather than reflexes.

Once you've fumbled your way through the terrifying menus (loads of Japanese text and tech data), you set up your attack fleet, each squadron of ships occupying one or more hexagonal tiles. Alongside the usual fighters and scouts of the R-Concept fleet, you're also responsible for capital ships and power-ups. If you want to couple *R-Type*'s famous Force upgrade to a particular squadron, for instance, you have to position the two accordingly.

It's fairly logical, and things soon get lively as your fleet sizes increase to cope with ever-greater opposition. It's also obvious strategy-RPG stuff, full of quick cut-scenes and hit-point exchanges. But above all it's *R-Type*, back from extinction in unusual form, but never unrecognisable. Fans might feel confused at first, but they won't be disappointed. **Duncan Harris** **80**



THQ | PS3 | Out now

Cars: Mater-National

More flop gear than top gear

Hurray – it's another game based on everyone's least-favourite Pixar film. Mater-national is a simple driving game set around the hub-world of Radiator Springs. You control Lightning McQueen – you know, the one who was voiced by Owen Wilson – and must complete a range of different driving tasks. These range from traditional races, relay events – like passing the baton minus the sweaty, athletic blokes – to rhythm-action games. The later are surprisingly difficult, and often require the finger flexibility of an ambidextrous brain surgeon.

While the rhythm sections are quite addictive, the racing itself splutters to a halt as soon as it gets out of the pits. Unresponsive, twitchy handling means driving is a chore rather than a pleasure, and the AI is probably too aggressive for sprogs. *Cars* isn't terrible, though. The action is reasonably fast and smooth and the visuals are pleasingly brash and colourful. But, as an adult, this won't hold your attention for more than ten minutes. **Dave Meikleham**

51

Sony | PS3 | Out now

Everyday Shooter

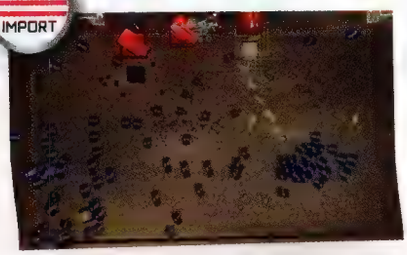
Humdrum title hides something special

From Jonathan Mak, the bloke behind PSP puzzler *Lumines*, comes another oddity. Although *Shooter* is essentially just a top-down shoot-'em-up, its minimalist cel-shaded look means it's light-years away from Asteroids. Cleverly, each level only lasts as long as the song playing in the background. Your goal is to survive until the end of each track, while shooting everything from Lego-like blocks to things that look like embryos. The easy rock stylings are also contextual, meaning the guitar riffs become increasingly drawn out as you chain combos together.

The combo (or 'chaining') system is pretty confusing at first, though. And because each level is so different to the one that preceded it in terms of what you're shooting and how combos work, you can feel constantly dazed. But the beautiful art design, and addictive risk versus reward system of trying to chain combos while dodging all the detritus on screen, means *Everyday Shooter* is constantly compelling. At a few measly quid on the Store, it's essential stuff. **Dave Meikleham**

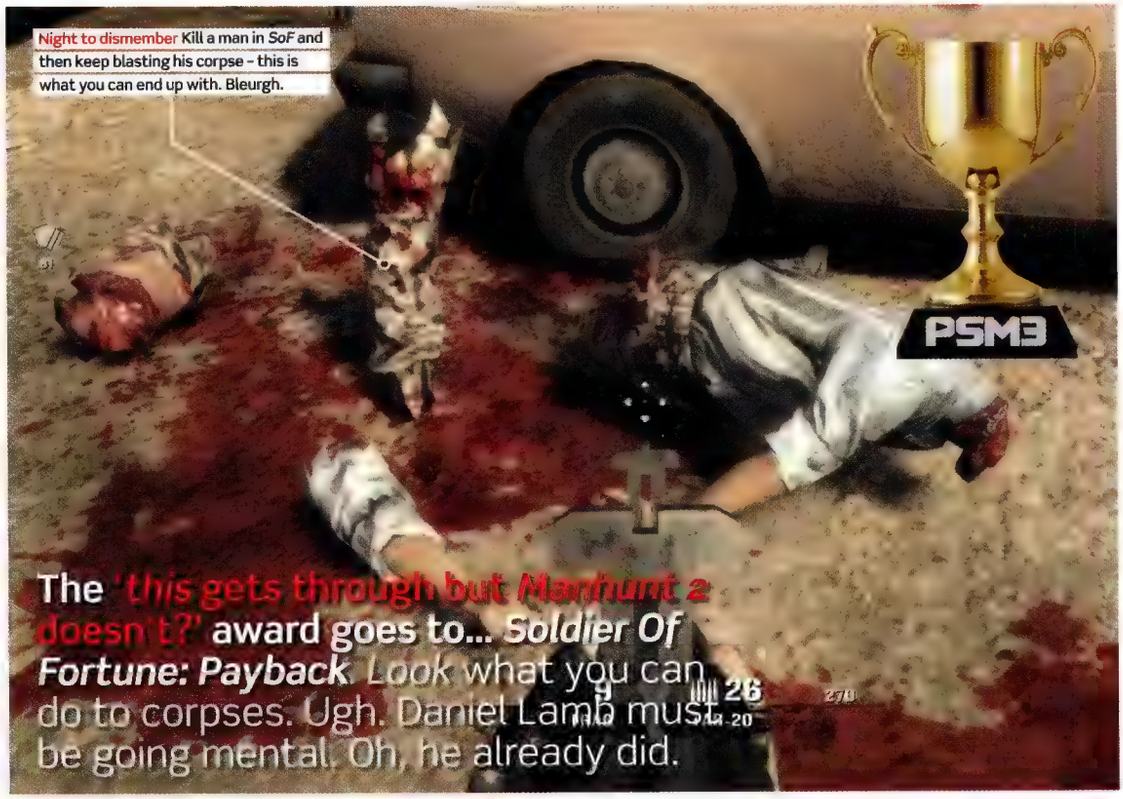
79

IMPORT



PSM3 Awards

The highlights (and lowlights) of this month's reviews



Night to dismember Kill a man in *SoF* and then keep blasting his corpse – this is what you can end up with. Bleurgh.

The *'this gets through but Manhunt 2 doesn't?'* award goes to... ***Soldier Of Fortune: Payback***. Look what you can do to corpses. Ugh. Daniel Lamb must be going mental. Oh, he already did.

The best Eye use award goes to...

Burnout Paradise

Stick your face in the game with the Eye and everyone online will be able to see your ugly mug as they ram you off the road without a care in the world. Smart.

The daft comparison award goes to...

The Club

"Treat it like a racing game," say the devs. Except racing games don't have huge blokes with guns. And no matter what you say, men just don't go as *fast* as cars.

Hi-Score Table

☐ Burnout Paradise	p62 89%
☐ Unreal Tournament 3	p56 85%
☐ GT5 Prologue	p66 82%
☐ Devil May Cry 4	p22 80%
☐ R-Type Tactics	p78 80%
☐ Everyday Shooter	p79 79%
☐ The Club	p74 72%
☐ Turok	p68 71%
☐ Blazing Angels 2	p78 70%
☐ Soldier Of Fortune	p78 62%
☐ NBA 2008	p78 61%
☐ Asterix At The Olympics	p78 54%
☐ Cars Mater-National	p79 51%
☐ Time Crisis 4	p72 44%

Buyer Beware! The games they're afraid to send us

Alvin & The Chipmunks Eidos
The chipmunks head off to play at music festival – deep breath – Rockathonapolooza. This'll be a rhythm-action game, then. Shots make it look like Mad Maestro, but much more dull and rubbish.

Hot Wheels – Beat That! Activision
Miniature cars? Tracks that run through bedrooms, bathrooms and other household locales? Sounds familiar, but as we haven't thought about Micro Machines in years, we're hardly excited by this.

International Cricket Captain 3 Empire
It's "the number one selling cricket management series". Because it's the *only* cricket management series. Has a "new 3D engine". Hold us back.

Playing PlayStation Longer Harder Deeper

Extended Play

Start

CELEBRATE

80 The *Tomb Raider* world tour
How Lara Croft travelled the globe, and ended up back where she began.

GENIUS

82 The ten most astonishing moments in *Drake's Fortune*
Ten bits to make you gasp in *Uncharted*.

EXPLOITS

86 Find all the golden bolts in *Ratchet: TOD*
Nail the game with our bolt collect-o-grid.

SECRETS

88 See *Killer7*'s rocket-powered car of ultimate death
Takes dangerous driving to a new level.

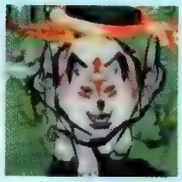
FACE-OFF

90 Give Howard from the Halifax a good hiding in *Smackdown*
Complete with terrible, terrible banking jokes.

ONLINE

92 The annual *PES* vs *FIFA* online derby
We put both games through their paces. Which is king of online?

CLASSIC



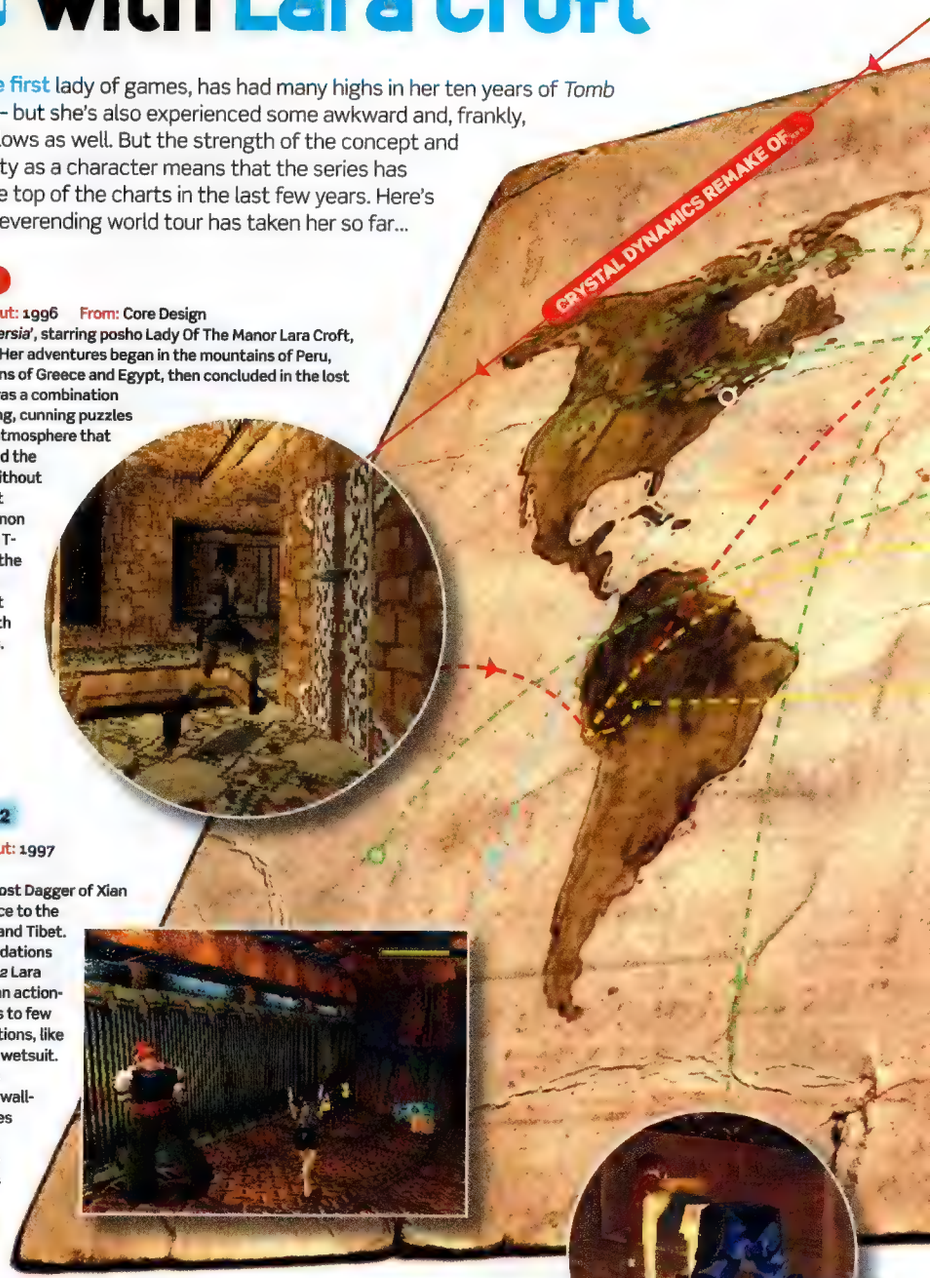
96 Why *Okami* outdoes *Zelda*
How the story of a wolf topped one of gaming's greatest series.

NATION

98 Arnie out to terminate violent videogames
And he's got *Conan* in his sights...

Around the world with Lara Croft

Lara Croft, the first lady of games, has had many highs in her ten years of *Tomb Raider* games – but she's also experienced some awkward and, frankly, near-terminal lows as well. But the strength of the concept and Lara's popularity as a character means that the series has returned to the top of the charts in the last few years. Here's where Lara's neverending world tour has taken her so far...



TOMB RAIDER

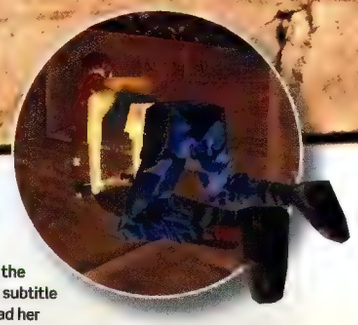
Format: PSone **Out:** 1996 **From:** Core Design

The '3D *Prince Of Persia*', starring posho Lady Of The Manor Lara Croft, became a huge hit. Her adventures began in the mountains of Peru, continued in the ruins of Greece and Egypt, then concluded in the lost city of Atlantis. It was a combination of daring platforming, cunning puzzles and spine-tingling atmosphere that would have captured the imagination even without Lara's presence, but became a phenomenon because of her. The T-Rex emerging from the gloom was just one memorable moment from a game rife with stunning set-pieces.

TOMB RAIDER 2

Format: PSone **Out:** 1997
From: Core Design

The search for the Lost Dagger of Xian took Lara from Venice to the Great Wall of China and Tibet. Building on the foundations of the original, in *TR2* Lara started to become an action-ready Barbie, thanks to few natty costume additions, like a flight jacket and a wetsuit. Lara's move set was improved to include wall-climbing, and vehicles were often key in solving puzzles. The best example of this resulted in a daring speedboat jump through a huge window.



TOMB RAIDER 3: ADVENTURES OF LARA CROFT

Format: PSone **Out:** 1998 **From:** Core Design

By now, Lara Croft was videogame icon – appearing in TV ads and the cover of The Face magazine. This explains the introduction of the subtitle – the story of Lara herself became central to an adventure that had her searching for artifacts in London, Nevada, India and the South Pacific. This was one of toughest games in the series, thanks to limited save points, indestructible marine life and an opening that plunged Lara into a spiked pit after only a matter of seconds.

TOMB RAIDER: ANNIVERSARY

Format: PS2 Out: 2007 From: Crystal Dynamics

Released to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the first *Tomb Raider*, this was a 'reimagining' of the original, taking the same plot, locations and puzzles then recreating them with the move set and graphics of *Legend*. The result was a game that had the same tension of the original but with gameplay and controls that satisfied modern gamers. Presented as a 'gift' to fans, Crystal Dynamics were testing the waters to see whether gamers wanted this purer experience compared to the more action-focused *Legend*. Turns out they do.

LARA CROFT TOMB RAIDER: LEGEND

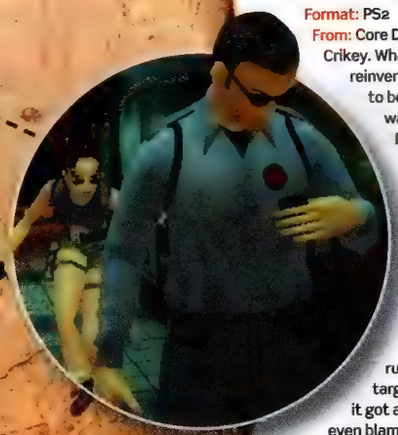
Format: PS2 Out: 2007 From: Crystal Dynamics

Eidos, who own the *Tomb Raider* brand, gave development duties to US team Crystal Dynamics and charged them with restoring Lara Croft into the affections of gamers. They achieved this by resetting the series in terms of plot and characters, returning Lara to more suitable surroundings – the ancient ruins of Bolivia, Peru, Ghana and Nepal – and created a free-flowing action-packed adventure, with set-pieces like a base jump into a Kazakhstan military base and a thrilling rooftop chase in downtown Tokyo. It certainly worked, with nearly three million copies sold. Result.

TOMB RAIDER: ANGEL OF DARKNESS

Format: PS2 Out: 2003 From: Core Design

Crikey. What was supposed to be a reinvention of Lara turned out to be glitchy, rushed mess. It was set in Paris and Prague, with Lara attempting to clear her name of murder, but there were greater concerns – outdated gameplay and awkward controls. Set for a 2002 release, it was eventually turfed out in June of 2003 amid rumours of it being rushed to meet financial targets. The sales were poor, it got a critical mauling and was even blamed for the box office failure of the second *Raider* film.



TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION

Format: PSone Out: 1999 From: Core Design

After the urban setting of *TR3*, the series returned to Egypt – the spiritual home of tomb raiding – for the fourth game. We learned more about Lara's past, as her former mentor Werner Von Croy became possessed by an evil Egyptian God and assumed the role as the main bad guy. There were new moves, such as swinging on ropes, but the general feeling was of a series that had perhaps come to its natural conclusion – something encouraged by the game's ending, which had Lara crushed underneath a collapsing pyramid... and presumed dead.

TOMB RAIDER: CHRONICLES

Format: PSone Out: 2000 From: Core Design

Not even the fact that Lara was, presumably, dead could stop the yearly *Tomb Raider* juggernaut from releasing another adventure. This time it consisted of four flashback levels, as friends of Lara recalled events that took place in Ireland, Russia, Rome and New York. By now the game engine – groundbreaking in 1996 – was starting to look tired, and not even the presence of a sixteen-year-old Lara in one particular flashback was enough to prevent a rather muted critical reception. It did, however, wrap up the mystery of Lara's supposed death – the game concluded with Von Croy celebrating her discovery. Lara would live on. Unfortunately, the next game in the sequence kind of made us wish she hadn't...

ON THE DISC
See Drake's Fortune in action on the disc

10 reasons why Drake's Fortune kicks ass

Andy Kelly

Midnight Snap This is one of the most satisfying melee attacks. It's an instant kill.

1 THE BRUTAL COMBOS

Pulling these off requires precise timing, but the pay-off is worth the effort. Your attack depends on where the enemy is positioned, so if you perform one next to a wall Drake will pin him against it and punch him in the kidneys until he slumps to the floor. Ouch. You can also catch enemies from behind; run up to them and press ◎ before they catch sight of Drake and he'll snap their necks.

Pub Sony
Dev Naughty Dog
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM96 89%
A heroic act on-packed blockbuster of a game that makes up for a lack of originality by being consistently, relentlessly entertaining

PLAYSTATION GENIUS

3 THE BUNKER ESCAPE

Drake has to escape from the abandoned Nazi submarine base, but Navarro's henchmen are running wild. Luckily, the Descendants don't take sides and you can run past unchallenged as the mutated freaks distract the guards. This is the game's most exciting firefight and it can get overwhelmingly hectic as dozens of enemies battle each other. But if it all gets too much, there's always a pretty sunset to look at.

Running man If it all gets too much, leg it to safety.
Sub pair The sub base is similar to the one in Raiders Of The Lost Ark. But with monsters.

2 THE AMAZING WATER EFFECTS

According to a games programmer we know, what Naughty Dog have achieved with *Uncharted*'s water effects is jaw-dropping, what with the transparency and everything. And to us, it looks incredible. Whether it's dribbling down a waterfall, forming puddles on the floor or reflecting sunlight, it always looks incredibly realistic. And, as we've mentioned before, Drake's top gets all wet and clingy. Mmm.

5 THE CHASE

OK, so this bit's pretty generic gameplay-wise, but watching acres of hyper-detailed jungle rushing past at breakneck speeds is awesome to look at. It's also fun to shoot the pursuing trucks' tyres out so they go tumbling off the edge.

4 THE CUSTOMS HOUSE BATTLE

This tense action set-piece tests your cover-to-cover skills to the limit. As well as facing dozens of marauding pirates, you have to deal with grenade launchers and a gun emplacement. There are loads of ways to do this, but our preferred method is to find the sniper rifle hidden behind the starting staircase and go head-popping. This scene's also a showcase for *Uncharted*'s scarily realistic flanking AI.

6 THE SUNKEN CITY

This level lets you have a go on *Uncharted*'s only driveable vehicle – the jet ski. Slicing through the waterlogged city firing grenades at pirates perched atop buildings is a real action film moment. Also, look closely and you'll see that the jet ski is made by 'Orca' – a reference to Hooper's boat from Jaws. When you've made it through the city, you have to contend with coursing river rapids – a tricky proposition. More great water effects, too.

Splash wave The splashy water looks really incredible.
Blast zone Elena's grenades send ragdoll corpses flying everywhere.

7 THE U-BOAT

Similar to Lost's mysteriously land-bound slave ship The Black Rock, Nate and Sully find a WW2-era German U-boat resting precariously on the edge of a waterfall. One death-defying cliff-crawl later and Drake's aboard, nudging past mutilated Nazi corpses and rusty torpedos. On his way out, Nate knocks one of the torpedos over and it whirrs menacingly to life before exploding and sending the submarine tumbling down to the river below. This is *Drake's* at its mysterious, dramatic, explosive best.

8 THE VIEWS

When the action dies down, *Uncharted* presents you with lush, endless views to soak up. Drake even strikes an arms-on-hips pose when you leave him still next to a lush vista – it's almost like the designers knew we'd be stopping and staring. Hey, they probably did. This view's probably our favourite; the light hitting the sea looks achingly beautiful. It's almost enough to make you forget about the game.

9 THE FINAL BATTLE

Beneath an ominous blood red sky, Drake battles across Navarro's ship in the lashing rain. This bit's really tough – pop out for more than a second and his laser-targetting rifle will kill you in one brutal shot. When you reach the end you lose your weapons and are forced to fight Navarro bare-handed. There's nothing more macho than having a fist fight in the pouring rain.

10 THE SEXUAL TENSION

Elena and Nathan's relationship is fraught with tension, but underneath it all they're basically hot for each other. Refreshingly, they never actually kiss, even at the end after he saves her life, but there are plenty of breathy moments where they almost, *almost* do. This gives the characters depth lacking in most games.

Will they get it on in the second game? We'll have to see...

Fact: Elena's hair was originally brown, but it was changed.

The ones we didn't pick...

The collapsing platform
In a nod to Naughty Dog's first game, Crash Bandicoot, there's one section where you have to run across a series of collapsing platforms before they disappear. The quality of the platforming here is shoddy and frustrating, and we're glad we made it across.

The Descendant
The first time you fight [illegible] they're actually [illegible] transformed by the curse of treasure of El Dorado. [illegible] makes for a pretty [illegible] But we actually kind of like some of the [illegible] Maybe it's [illegible] the game.

EMAIL PSM3
Disagree with our choice? Then send us your picks
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

ON THE DISC
See older discs for loads of Ratchet footage

PLAYSTATION EXPLOITS

How to find every golden bolt in Ratchet & Clank: TOD

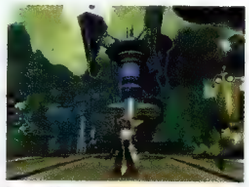
Steve Bailey

EMAIL PSM3
Want a game exploded in ludicrous detail? Tell us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

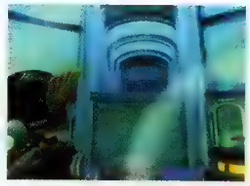
Pub Sony
Dev Insomniac
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM3 93%
Maybe you can't teach an old Lombax new tricks, but he can certainly teach the PS3 some new ones. Very much an action adventure in the trad *Ratchet* mould, this stunningly pretty and slick shooter gave the PS3 the props it has long deserved – although *Call Of Duty 4* may well challenge that supremacy

NUTS TO YOU 25 golden bolt locations, to get you started

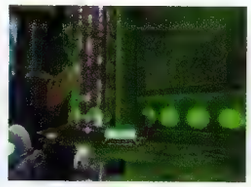
► Some require skill and lengthy explanation, but most simply need some pointers. And so, we present the location of 25 of the game's more 'straightforward' golden bolts. Trickier bolts are found on the page opposite.



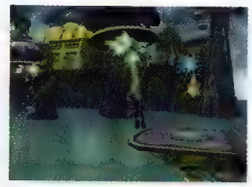
Location... Planet Cobalia
Once you've cleared the Gelanator factory, walk past the smuggler's ship, turn right, and then hang a left up a slope. At the end, you'll find a series of rotating platforms that take you to the bolt.



Location... Planet Kortog
When in the Hall Of Knowledge, reach the room where you raise the jellyfish. See the bolt just up to the left? Use the Gelanator on the nearest jellyfish, then bounce up to collect your prize.

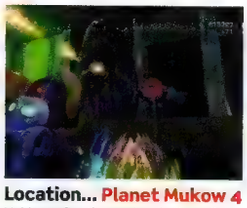


Location... Planet Mukow 1
You'll be needing the Decryptor for this, from Sargasso. Simply solve the rolling ball puzzle found just on the periphery of the plaza you enter, just after you landed on Mukow.

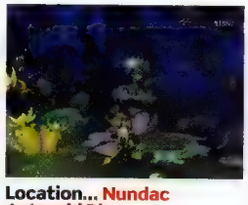


Location... Planet Mukow 2
After opening up the corridor of death with the Tachyon statues, you'll find a series of Swingshot orbs hanging around in the carnival area that will take you to the bolt.

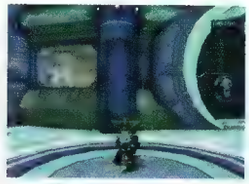
Location... Planet Mukow 3
Just before one of the ziplines en route to the arena, be sure to look left. You'll see a floating platform decked with flame-spewing Tachyons statues. The bolt is at the very end of it.



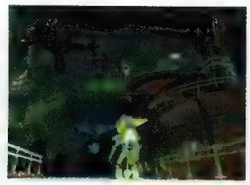
Location... Planet Mukow 4
Not long after the previous bolt, you'll come to a wall that needs the Geo Laser – so you'll have to return later – to cut it open. Behind it, you'll find Mukow's fourth and final golden doobrie.



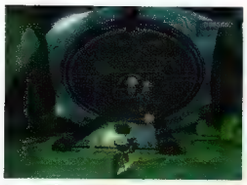
Location... Nundac Asteroid Ring
Get over to teleport cannon beta. Around this area, you'll see an island to the right that you can reach via swingshot. You'll find the bolt on that island, behind crates.



Location... Planet Ardolis 1
You'll need the Holo Pirate costume here. Use the teleporter next to your ship to take you back to the pirate command centre, and you'll find a door your can open there.

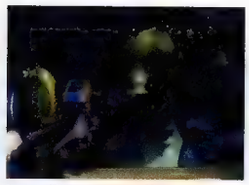


Location... Planet Ardolis 2
From the start, follow the path to the left, the one that requires lots of Helipods. Towards the end, you'll come to some docked ships – there's a lift you can sneakily use to jump up to the bolt.

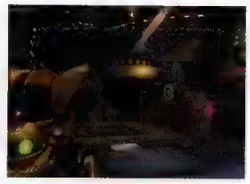


Location... Planet Ardolis 3
Again, you'll need the Holo Pirate disguise. When you get through the cave and into the pirates' lair (just after the wall that needs the Geo Laser) you'll find a door on the right, containing the bolt.

Location... Rykan V
After completing the Gyro Cycle run, don't just sprint into the building. Instead, look over to your left – you should see some bushes, and the bolt is hidden within them.

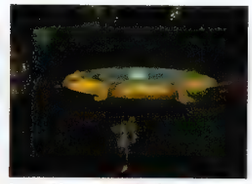


Location... Kreeli Comet
Once across the anti-grav walkway, turn around and you'll see a slingshot orb. Hook yourself up to it, follow the path and change into your Holo Pirate disguise to open the door at the end.

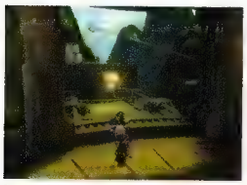


Location... Viceron 1
From the start, head left and get those Helipods ready. It's a long old trip, but keep your eyes peeled for Helipod prompts and you should eventually be able to find your way there.

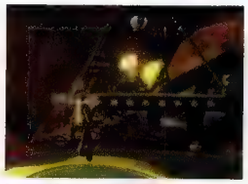
Location... Viceron 2
Just before you rescue Talwyn, there's a corridor with a Decryptor dock at one end. Use this and solve the ball-tilting puzzle, and you'll be given easy access to the planet's second and final bolt.



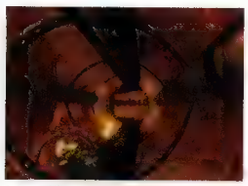
Location... Jasindu 1
Just to the right of your ship is a lift that takes you down into a Gelanator section. Work through it and, near the end, you'll find the bolt hidden behind a Gelanator dispenser, in an alcove.



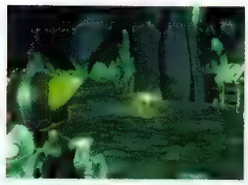
Location... Jasindu 2
Work your way through the stage. At one point you're expected to walk through a room propped up on tank-like treads. Instead, take a sneaky hidden path just to its right and follow that.



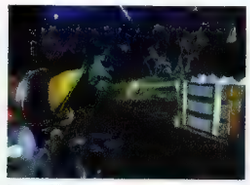
Location... Ublik Passage 1
Get to the spot where you turn the crank to open your first locked door. To the right, you should see a Grav Boot walkway, that will take you straight to this relatively simple bolt.



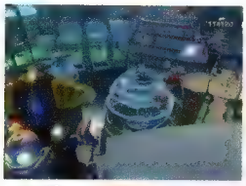
Location... Ublik Passage 2
Before the boss fight, you should notice a Grav Boot walkway just next to the door that takes you out into the arena. Use this, then the Gyro Cycle, and you should pick up the bolt on your travels.



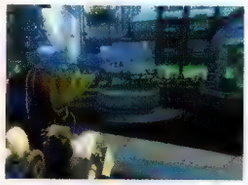
Location... Reepor 1
You'll need to complete the level, so that you can come back with Clank. Return to the underground area and, where you see the Gadgetron vendor, you'll find a route you can glide across to.



Location... Reepor 2
After completing the level, take the lift at the start. When you re-enter the cavern, look to the left. Down below, you'll see a platform your can raise with the Helipods. The bolt is on that.



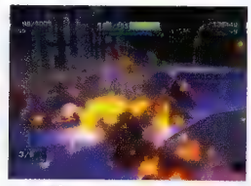
Location... Igliak 1
After climbing the level's first Grav Boot walkway, turn around and look down into the area you just cleared. It's on top of a clear-domed building and you can glide your way back down to it.



Location... Igliak 2
Once you've opened the door to your ship, return to the rectangular hallway (with columns along the side). Off to the left you'll see it on a walkway, attached to another clear-domed building.

Location... Sargasso 1
Once you've worked your way through the Gelanator plant and have emptied your Gelanator weapon, look down to see the bolt – then glide down to pick it up, en route to the rest of the level.

Location... Sargasso 2
One of the dinosaurs (you'll pass him as you fly through the rings earlier in the level) has two buttons hidden under his feet. Wait for him to lift his feet and press them both, plus the nearby third button.



Location... Fastoon
You'll only be able to get this at the very end of the game. When Ratchet and Talwyn step on the switches to open up the remainder of the level, they'll also open up a door in the plaza behind you.

Ratchet: TOD FAQ

Q What are golden bolts? The sequel to Pop Tarts?
A No, silly, golden bolts are hidden collectibles scattered throughout each and every one of the levels. There are 25 to find in total, and finding them all unlocks a special bonus level and a special weapon.

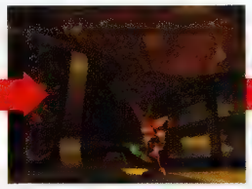
Q Extra costumes? There's all I'm getting here?
A Technically, yes, but no. Following them all is a pleasurable and rewarding journey in itself, but every bolt you find unlocks a costume for Ratchet and Clank. The levels are also full of huge, hard-to-find bolts that unlock cheats. Unless you complete the journey to find all the golden bolts first, you won't see the costumes appear, just how massive each stage is.

CHINNY RYKAN The tricky Rykan V bolt

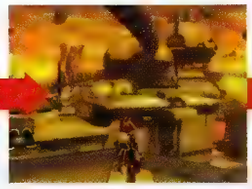
Step 1... Port ahoy
Make your way to the spaceport. It's the rather calm area you'll enter after the uber-scrap against the Cragmites, with Cronk and Zephyr as back-up.

Step 2... Box fresh
There's a large crate you can jump and grab the ledge of. This will take you up to a rooftop, next to two orange pipes. Jump and grab the ledge just below the pipes.

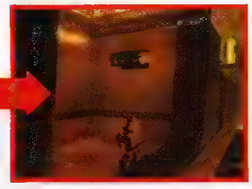
Step 3... Finger lickin'
Shimmy your way around this ledge, drop down and then leap across to the next ledge. Keep going in that direction, and fall into another spaceport-style area.



Step 4... Just passing
At the opposite end to where you entered is a walkway for your Grav Boots. Scoot up this, turn right and jump down to the building with the zipline over it.

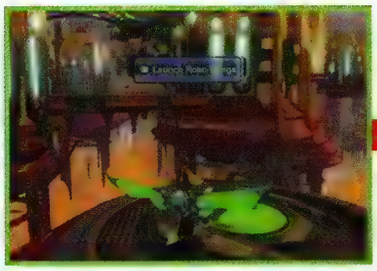


Step 5... Chimney sweep
Don't use the zipline. There's another rooftop just after this one, opposite the walkway you used to get up here. Jump onto that, then head to the far corner.

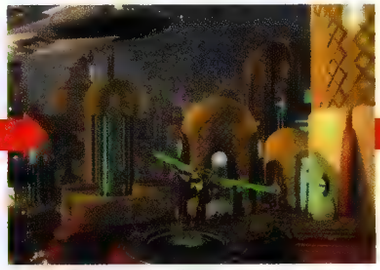


Step 6... Nosy Parkour
Turn the camera around to face Ratchet, and, below him, you should see a window into the building, containing the gold bolt. Carefully jump down into the alcove.

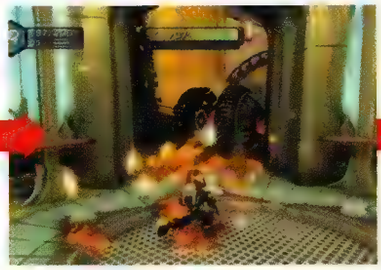
FLAP OF HONOUR Planet Kortog's second gold bolt



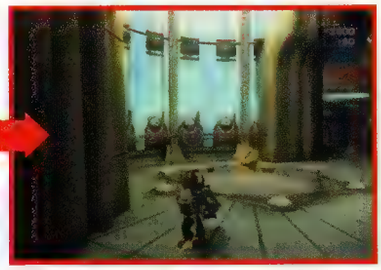
Sleepy holo Complete the level so that you've got the Holo Wings. You can use any launch pad for this, if you like, but the one at the start is quickest if you're returning to Kortog.



Soar what? Glide around, and keep an eye out for a length of bridge that connects two small, round rooms. You'll spot it on the map, as you won't have been there before.

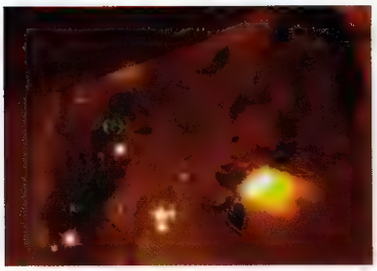


Cannon can When you land on the bridge section, be careful there are Psychocannons hanging around. Equip something explosive (the Negotiator, say) and splat them.

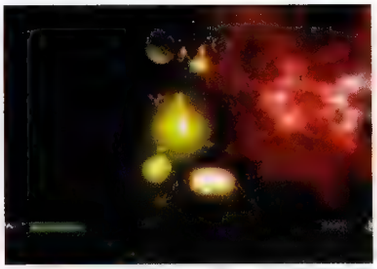


Bolt hole With the Psychocannons down, you can find the gold bolt – it's in one of the small rooms. You can't miss it. Need to return to your ship swiftly? Just fling yourself off the bridge...

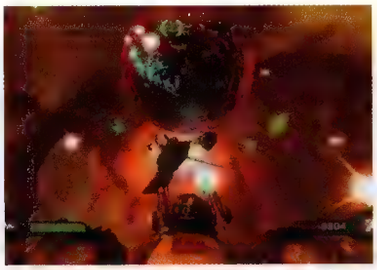
FLIGHT BULB Gold bolts in outer space...



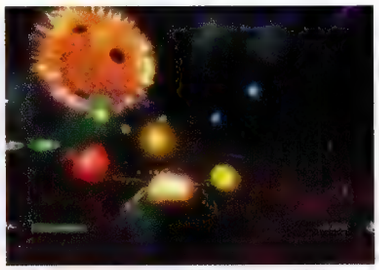
Start wars There are three shooter sections in *Tools Of Destruction* and each one hosts its own gold bolt. To get them, you'll have to shoot the glowing orbs scattered throughout.



Voron Asteroid Belt A total of five targets need to be shot. The locations are obvious, but don't be distracted by shooting other canisters – they give raritanium, but not the real prize.



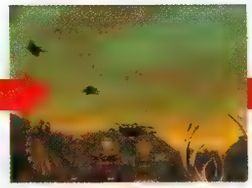
Rakar Star Cluster You'll need to collect five again, but there's one before Clank mans the rear-gun turret, and another for Clank to shoot soon after. Watch out for one after a power-up ring.



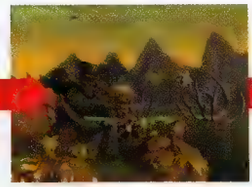
Verdigris Black Hole Again, find five. A tricky one is in the minefield, which you may miss due to the glowing mines. There's one in Clank's shooting section, but the rest should be obvious.

NEARLY THERE Planet Sargasso's remaining bolts

Step 1... Two cool
This is it – your final two bolts. Then you can collect your 'Golden Child' skill point. Of course, you're going to need those Holo Wings to do it.



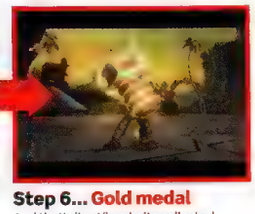
Step 2... First bolt!
Head to the launch pad at the beginning of the level and spring up into the air. You're looking for a giant dino, and will use his back as a landing strip.



Step 3... Jurassic tip
After launch, hang a left, then glide right and then left again. The dino you'll find has the gold bolt atop his spine, in plain view. Just plop down onto it.

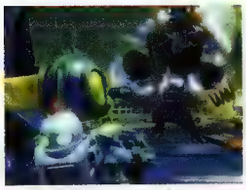
Step 4... Second bolt!
Head back to the starting point. Launch yourself, and then keep flying straight ahead. It won't be long until you come to an untouched portion of the map...

Step 5... Mr Driller
...in the form of a drilling platform. It's guarded by several troops, but the bolt is easy to spot – located on a square platform, ripe for the taking.



Step 6... Gold medal
And that's it – All 32 bolts collected. Spend them on new skins if you want, or simply bask in the satisfaction of having seen most of the game's secret corners.

SHOWING OFF And how about some skill points?

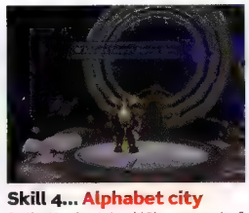


Got all the bolts, eh? Well, you're still not finished. There are dozens of Skill Points to earn, by completing tasks, which will unlock cheats. Here are five to get you going...

Skill 1... Judi wrench
On Planet Kortog, use ONLY your wrench to get from the start of the level all the way through to the place where you're given the Holo Wings.

Skill 2... What's that, R2?
In the Voron Asteroid Belt spaceship shooter section, do ten barrel rolls. Yup, just press R1 & R2 together ten times. Skilful? Nope. Cryptic? Yes.

Skill 3... Wheel of fortune
On Planet Mukow, make your way over to the Ferris Wheel of doom. And just ride it for five whole revolutions, without taking any damage.



Skill 4... Alphabet city
On the Nundac Asteroid Ring, use each of the teleporters – Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta, Epsilon, Zeta – in alphabetical order. Well, Greek alphabetical order.

Skill 5... Port and stilton
In Rykan V's spaceport, simply kill all 18 of the consumobots milling about the place. Repeat the trick in Cobalia's spaceport for another Skill Point.

ON THE DISC
Like CoD4? See more FPS action on Disc

PLAYSTATION SECRETS

Witnessing Killer7's rocket-boosting car of death

"Their faces are ripped off by the obscene g-forces"

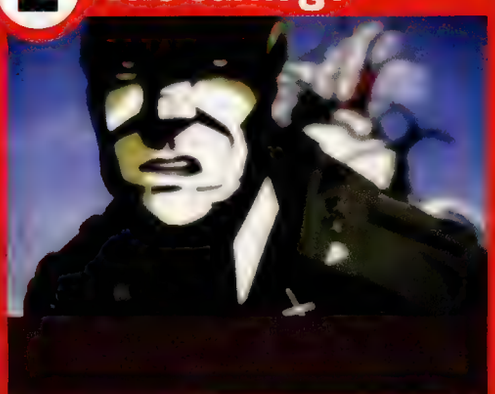
Queasy rider

Killer7's skull-splitting freakiness is hardly a great secret. However, there's so much more to its wacko depths than the seven playable assassins that may not actually exist, and the army of grotesque 'Heaven Smile' suicide bombers that you fight. Take, for example, Texan-based cult leader Andrei Ulmeyda, your target from the game's Cloudman episode. He likes to select random cult members to unwittingly 'drive themselves to death'. He tells them they've won a car. They get in, and it speeds off into the distance, accelerating and accelerating... until they die and their faces are ripped off by the obscene g-forces. It's all conveyed via a glorious five-minute cut-scene, rendered in stunning anime style.

1 The showdown

Andrei the giant mentalist You'll catch up with Ulmeyda at the end of the stage, and he'll spill all of his demented secrets. But not before bunging one of his devotees in his death car, then watching his victim's gibbering face via a bank of multi-angled monitors.

2 The carnage



You and whose army... oh Suddenly, the US army turns up and (surprise) causes a massive fuss, injecting Ulmeyda with the Heaven Smile virus. The resulting mushroom cloud of blood leaves everyone dead, apart from a rampaging mutant Ulmeyda.

3 The aftermath

Angel Gabrielle Once you've taken Ulmeyda down (in a dizzying shootout staged in a labyrinth of connected vehicles), what becomes of the poor death-car subject, known as Gabrielle Clemence? Well, that's another lovely cut-scene...

PlayStation's best kept secrets uncovered every month

Daft cheat › **Call Of Duty 4** › Turn people into tyres

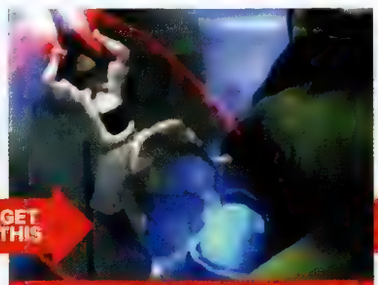
Collect your split 15 intel points. They're scattered around the map.

This triggers the 'A Good Year' classic, which is, as you'll see, a *hilarious* pun.

Now, whenever you shoot people, they explode into tyres. Lovely-rubbery. Or summat.

Hidden character › **God Of War 2** › Play as Athena

Finish God Of War 2 on Titan mode. That'll be tricky. Best get cracking, then.



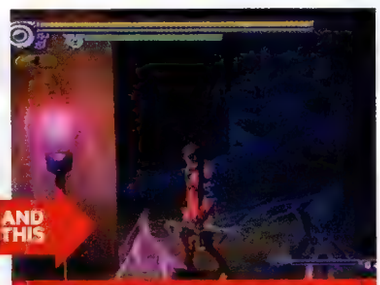
Now you can play as lady goddess Athena. She has power, and all that.

It also lovely adds spice to the secret sex minigame (see PSM89). Hel-*lo*, ladies.

Weapons › **Onimusha: Dawn Of Dreams** › Singing and tennis

Pull the pause. Over the Special option is the main menu, and get ready with those fingers...

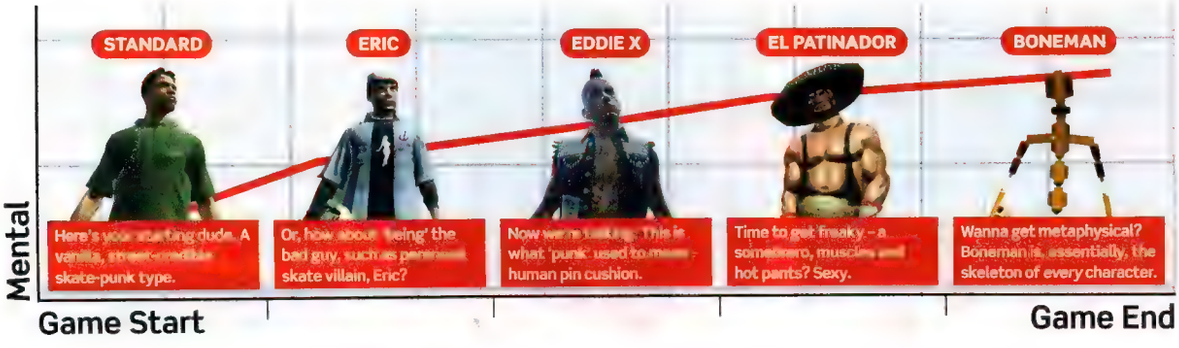
Try ←, ←, ⊙, ▲, ↑, ●, ▲, ↑, ●, ▲, ↓, ■. Now Tenkai can equip a microphone stand.



Go ←, ↑, ●, ▲, ↓, ■, ↓, ■, ↓, ■, ↓, ■. Now Jubei sports (ho ho) a tennis racket. Smashing.

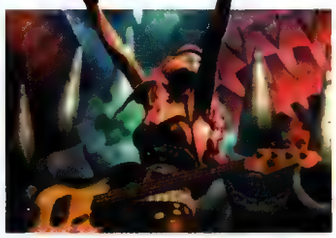
From zero to hero in... Proving Ground

From grazed elbows to naked bones, via a fool, a badass and a bulky weirdo


STANDARD
ERIC
EDDIE X
EL PATINADOR
BONEMAN
Here's your starting dude. A vanilla, street-credible skate-punk type.
Or, how about being the bad guy, such as perennial skate villain, Eric?
Now we're talking. This is what 'punk' used to mean - human pin cushion.
Time to get freaky – a sometzero, muscles and hot pants? Sexy.
Wanna get metaphysical? Boneman is, essentially, the skeleton of every character.
Mental
Game Start
Game End

The Top 5

Cheats you *must* know



1 Rock Band
Unlock all songs
At the 'Press Start' screen, press Red, Yellow, Blue, Red(2), Blue(2), Red, Yellow, Blue to unlock all songs. This code disables saving.

2 NBA 2K8
Unlock 2K Sports team
Enter '2ksports' as a code to unlock the 2K Sports Team.

3 Need For Speed ProStreet
Unlock everything
Enter 'UNLOCKALLTHINGS' or 'MASTERCODE' as a code to unlock all the bonuses.

4 Blazing Angels 2
Invincibility
Pause the game, then hold L2 and quickly press ■, ▲(2), ■. Then hold L2 and quickly press ▲, ■(2), ▲.

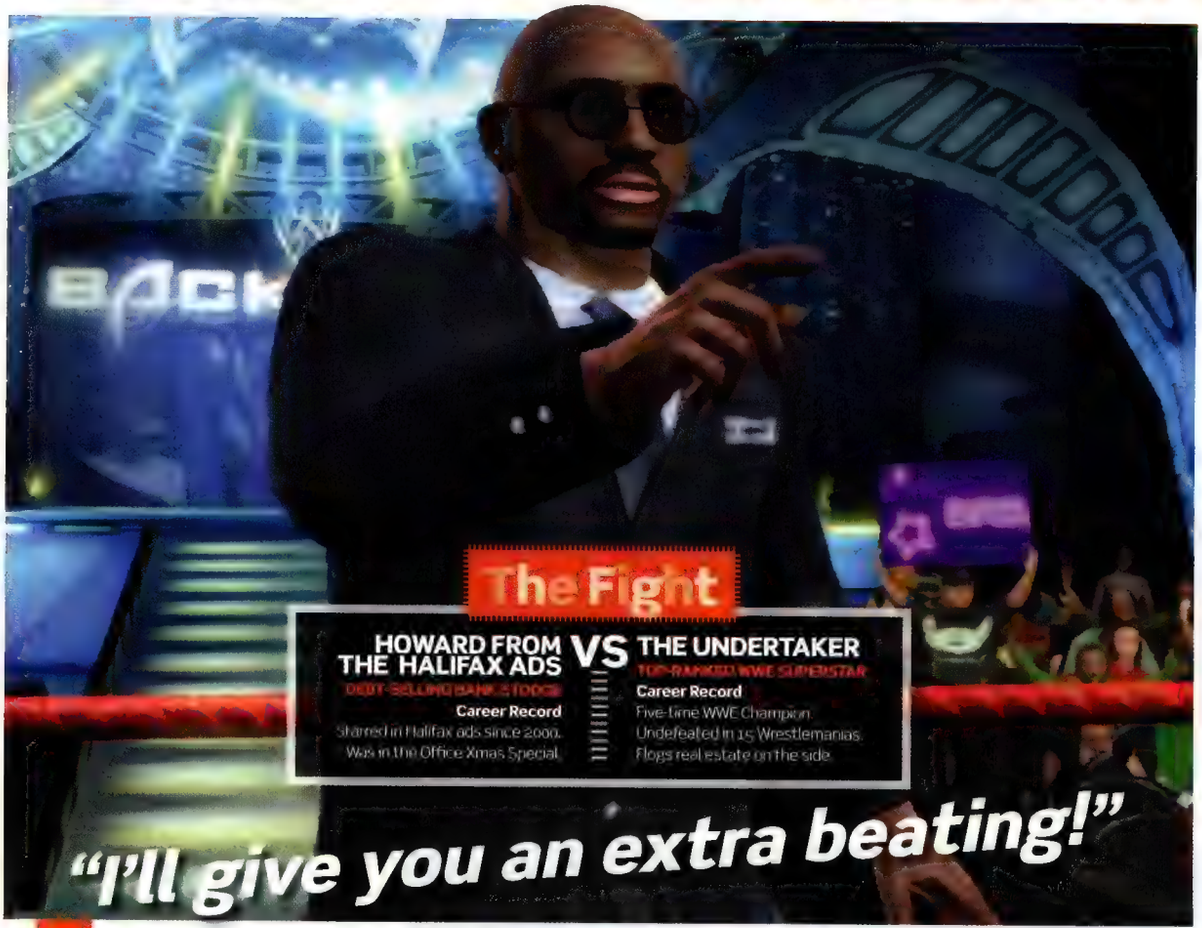
5 Simpsons Game
Unlock Homer's costumes and trophies
At the main menu, press ←, →, ▲(2), ■, L3 to unlock all of Homer's costumes and trophies for the current game session. If you entered it correctly, you will hear Bart laugh.

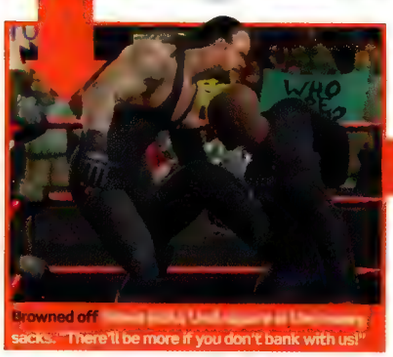
ON THE DISC
Last month's disc had the [illegible]

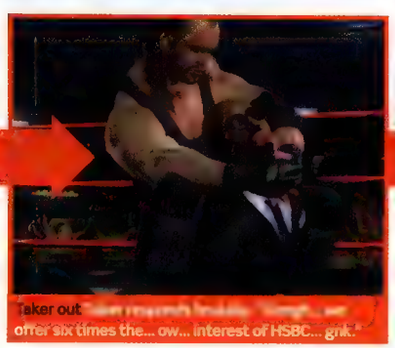
PLAYSTATION FACE-OFF

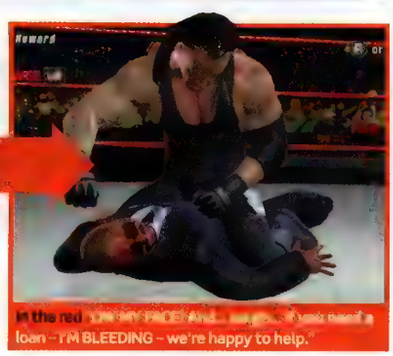
In the red... Halifax Howard gets smashed in Smackdown 08

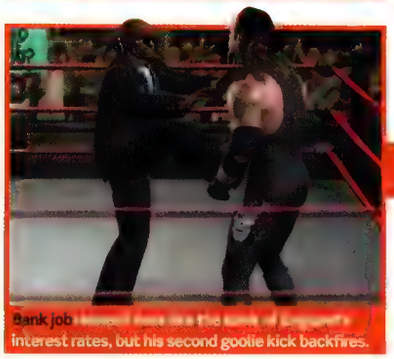
David Cook




Browned off [illegible] sacks. "There'll be more if you don't bank with us!"


Taker out [illegible] offer six times the... ow... interest of HSBC... grk."

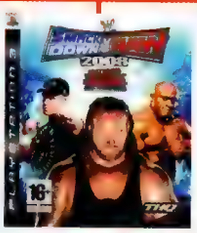

In the red [illegible] loan – I'M BLEEDING – we're happy to help."


Bank job [illegible] interest rates, but his second goolie kick backfires.

Head first [illegible] you an interest-free mortgage! Please... AAARGH..."

Loan ranger [illegible] to bank with Barclays," sneers a victorious Taker.

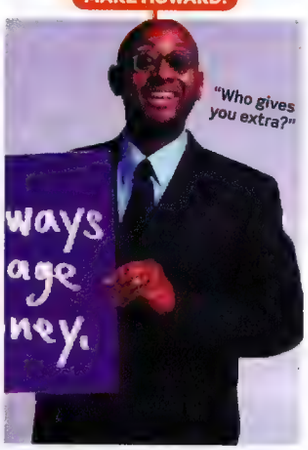
USE WWE SMACKDOWN 2008



Go to Create-A-Superstar mode

Editing Tip Experiment with face and head sizes for the perfect grappler.

MAKE HOWARD!



Body and face menus

Head	-3, 67, 0
Forehead	0, -100, -29, -5
Eye Type	2
Eyelashes/eyebrows	1, 1
Lips/teeth	1, 1
Goatee	1
Moustache	1
Skin tone	6
Skin aging	0
Hair	2
Height	195cm
Body type	2
Neck	1, -71, 0, 0
Chest	-37, 0, 0
Abdomen	13, 19, 0
Waist	0, -14, 0

Clothing

Glasses	16
Jackets	6
Tops	32
Accessories	2
Bottoms	30
Footwear	1
Bracelet	Large gold black

Biography

Style	Showman, Technical
Crowd signs	Am I On TV?

@ Email us Who should we twat?
Mail psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Thanks to Tom at www.caws.ws for the Howard model. Enjoy creating your own superstars? Check out the site.

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ON THE DISC
We've had lots on PES and FIFA on recent discs

PES 2008 vs FIFA 08: which scores highest online?

Dave Harrison

Pub Konami
Dev Konami
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM94 86%
A quality, intelligent game full of detail but still a long way from what we'd expected from a PS3 *PES*. The Master League hasn't been developed, the match action feels erratic and the slowdown is unforgivable. Feels like a place holder as we await the real *Evolution*

Most gamers didn't play PS2 online, partly because of the arcane – and stupidly piecemeal – complexities of getting the console online, but also because many games were shadows of their offline selves. This was definitely the case with two of the most popular multi-player games around – *PES* and *FIFA* – both excellent games played with a multi-tap, not so excellent with an ethernet cable involved. As anyone who played *PES6* online will tell you, being forced to score all your goals in the lag-free first half, then holding on for grim death when the game turned to lag-whipped porridge in the second half was no fun.

Lagging behind

Offline, *PES* was indisputably the better game due to its wonderful, scientifically-balanced – yet simultaneously fatalistic, unfair and realistic – gameplay. Unfortunately, as mentioned, this advantage was nullified online by horrendous lag, causing sometimes horrendous delays in pad-to-screen response time. At its worst, the ball would suddenly disappear or players wouldn't respond when you wanted to.

This meant that *FIFA*, despite being seen as the inferior game, actually provided the more comprehensive and satisfactory online experience – with far more coherent league modes, and the 'joy' – or rather, necessity – of actually seeing what you're doing.

PS3 makes online gaming a *lot* easier, with its hulking hard drive and plug-in-and-play approach – so the question is: have Konami learned from past failures, or can EA remain ahead? Without giving too much away, online football fans are faced with many of the same grim problems as ever. In fact, *PES 08* is technically worse, since you can only play one-on-one, not in co-op. But the winner is...

Pub EA
Dev EA
FYI PS3 | 2007 | PSM94 63%
A disappointment, mainly because the PS2 version had developed into a mature and classy sim. Subsequently this felt like a step back with its sluggish match action, spongy passing and soggy sprints. Opinions split mind, and some seem to prefer its slow pace

PRO EVO 2008 Defining moment

It might not have reached the perfection of previous games in the series, but *PES 2008* is still a thoroughbred in the world of football titles – and here's how it performs online.

PES used to gift gamers with one half of lag-free gaming where you had to build up a good, healthy score as the following half would see you crippled with lag. This has now stopped: it's equally bad in each half.

Before the recent patch, each match was full with disappearing balls, stuttering animation and whole snippets of play edited out. With the patch... it's more or less the same. The lag is slightly less noticeable, but not much.

At the moment *PES* can only cope with measly one-on-one challenges – there are none of those glorious games with your mates to indulge in, so those used to co-operative play will be sorely disappointed.

The actual gameplay is just like the offline *PES*. You can put all your usual tactics and goals into action. Be prepared to come up against Barcelona more often than not, though, thanks to its irresistible front line.

1 Rank outsider

In terms of leagues there's plenty of challenges to get involved in, the main one being the ranking system that allows you to challenge other rankers and attempt to improve your position. You start with a tally of 500 that will increase or decrease depending on performances. While it lacks the glitz of the EA setup the simple presentation has a heartening, hardcore honesty.

2 Jibber jabber

Headsets can be used to chat verbally to opponents or short scripted messages can be sent in to convey your emotions. Unfortunately there's no option to edit your own – you can probably imagine why – and you're limited to a list of Konami's suggestions that are so muted and cuddly it can take some of the fun out of beating people. Best to remain a silent assassin.

FIFA 08 Defining moment

A stunning looking game that can boast better presentation and more official licences than *PES*, but EA have struggled to take improvements seen in the PS2 version over to the new machine.

Games are often low scoring affairs mainly as it's easier to defend than it is to attack. Goal variety isn't huge, and usually involves Messi breaking down the right, drawing the keeper out then rolling it for Henry to tap in.

There's hardly any lag at all, so technically speaking *FIFA 08* is an excellent online experience. The problem is that the actual game is so slow and pedestrian it feels like you're playing your footy on 56K dial-up.

FIFA's full commentary accompanies the online gameplay which means it's far superior to *PES*'s. Whatever you think about Tyler and Gray you've got to admit *FIFA*'s commentary is simply outstanding.

USB headsets can be used to chat to other players online, which is great but the connection can become a bit stuttery when you're playing with four or more players. You can also chat using text in the lobbies.

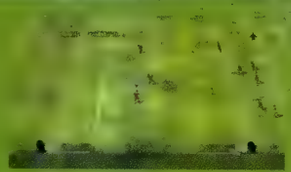
1 Be A Pro

Not only can you play against other gamers in conventional matches, you can take the Be A Pro challenge online, which has you controlling the one player on a team with four others against another load of gamers. It can be frustrating when you get ball hogs, but when it comes together it's undeniably heart-warming in an Escape To Victory kind of way.

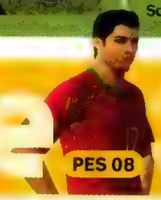
2 League leaders

FIFA 08 offers a myriad of league options, with set-ups to suit any tastes. Particularly interesting is the Team League where supporters of real football teams can play for the pride of their chosen team – currently Man Utd fans are top of the league. Getting involved in a league is probably the best way to get guaranteed play time as the Quick Match option is a little unreliable.

Pro Evolution Soccer 2008/FIFA 08 head to head

	PRO EVO 2008		FIFA 08		Score
Ease of use	The trickiest bit is registering online which is a bit fiddly. After that it's a complete breeze to get online and find a suitable match-up. **Score: 8 out of 10**		It's OK. First you have to register for an account, then you're bombarded with updates. Doesn't help if you want to get online quickly. **Score: 7 out of 10**		1-0 PES WINS
Numbers of players online	Adequate: you're never overwhelmed with challengers but you never struggle to find someone to play against. **Score: 7 out of 10**		A thriving online community but getting a game takes far longer than it should. And unfortunately the Quick Game option rarely works. **Score: 6 out of 10**		2-0 PES WINS
Extras	Hardly any. There's stat type breakdown of the various leagues and players, but this feels like a stripped down direct, no-fuss service. **Score: 5 out of 10**		Fantastic. EA are putting a lot of effort into nurturing an online community and the news updates and league options really does the job. **Score: 8 out of 10**		2-1 FIFA WINS
Comms	The set texts might annoy those who want to be more expressive, but it adds an air of civility. Or you can just get aggressive using a headset. **Score: 6 out of 10**		The headsets are useful for the Be A Pro mode and the texts work well in the lobbies. But there's little for those who want to keep it formal. **Score: 6 out of 10**		2-1 DRAW
Graphics	Just like the offline game so the likenesses are just as good and the unlicensed kits are just as bad. You get quick replays, too. **Score: 7 out of 10**		Wonderful to look at and the complete presentation is there, which means you'll get the cut-scenes at both half and full time. **Score: 9 out of 10**		2-2 PES WINS
Lag	It is bad, even with the patch, but not unplayable. Konami are attempting to rectify it so we hope we soon tell you it's perfectly smooth. **Score: 4 out of 10**		Our expert eyes didn't spot any. This can cope with up to eight players doing their own thing in Be A Pro matches. A solid performer. **Score: 9 out of 10**		2-3 FIFA WINS
Gameplay	Great. *PES 2008* might not be game we'd hoped for but it still delivers masses of excitement. Also, every single game feels different. **Score: 8 out of 10**		Doesn't feel as accomplished as its PS2 cousin as the game is very stodgy experience full of woolly, under-hit passes. Feels like it's underwater. **Score: 6 out of 10**		3-3 PES WINS
Overall verdict	The gameplay is so good that you could almost forgive the lag. Until you lose a game because the ball disappears. The lag has to be sorted. **Score: 6 out of 10**		A class act in terms of the presentation, but we still have issues about the ease of getting a quick game and the quality of the gameplay. **Score: 7 out of 10**		3-4 FIFA WINS

Final Score 3-4



ONLINE VERDICT

Winner? Just by not being lagged to hell *FIFA* takes the title.

The future? We expect *PES* to be much better next time out. Please?

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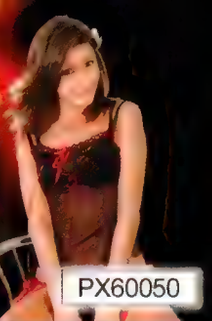
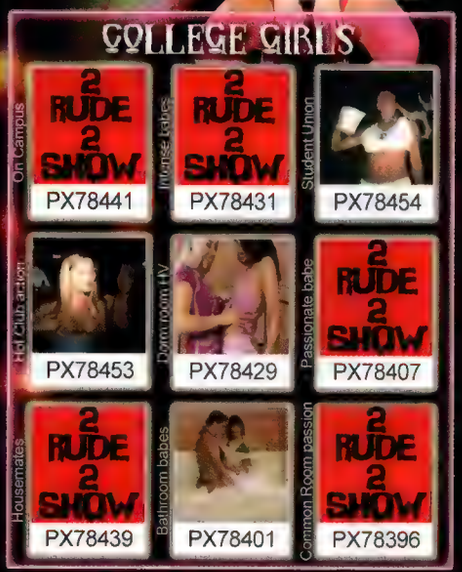
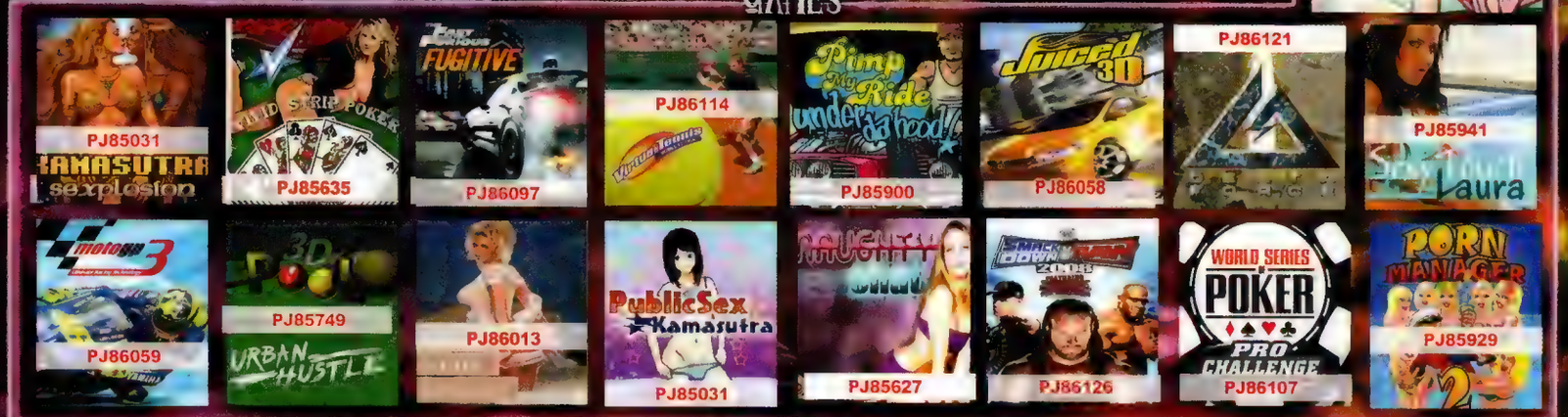


COLLEGE GIRLS



NAUGHTY VIDS

GAMES



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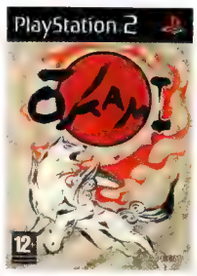
ON THE DISC
In the unlikely event of a sequel, it'll be on our disc

PLAYSTATION CLASSIC

Why Okami outdoes Zelda: Twilight Princess

Alex Dale



Pub Capcom
Dev Clover
FYI PS2 | 2007 | PSM84 95%
Action-adventurer featuring a wolf goddess painting moons with the analogue stick.

We can already sense your eyes rolling skyward. And – yes – we're a Sony only magazine. But the truth is exactly the opposite. From its 8-bit beginnings through to modern-day masterpieces such as *Majora's Mask*, we reckon we've stuck around for every last 'der-der-der-daaah' the Zelda series has had to offer. And so we feel authorised to tell you the words few dare to utter – *Okami* beats *Twilight Princess* hands down.

That already seems like an impossible position, but let's up the ante even more. Design-wise, *Twilight Princess* is by far the better game. It's clear that *Okami* is a 'tribute' to *Zelda*, and like all cover versions it doesn't quite pull it off. Its dungeons never hit the heights of, say, the Temple of Time, where the entire level is so fantastically turned on its head at the halfway point. No, a dog and its flea could never compete with that. But regardless, *Okami* wins out.

Art attack

It's as artist Marcel Dechamp once said: "It's not what you see that is art – art is the gaps." There's considerable debate as to whether *Zelda* and *Okami* are RPGs or not. Whichever side of this particularly tedious fence you fall, there's one thing that *Zelda* definitely has in common with the most beardy of genres; you spend inordinate amounts of time doing precisely bugger all.

EMAIL PSM3 @
What do you think of *Okami*? Let us know:
psm3@futurenet.co.uk

And that's where *Okami* outshines its bigger brother. See, *TP* might have the odd piece of puzzling brilliance, and it might be able to throw up cut-scenes powerful enough to make Mike Tyson weep. But to say that those moments alone make *TP* better is like putting forward that Starship Troopers is a better movie than Star Wars because of that bit where the dragonfly-thing decapitates a soldier. The simple fact of the matter is that neither of these games is to be played if you've got an imminent bus to catch, and you'll spend 90% of your time just pottering around.

And exploration is infinitely more enjoyable in *Okami* – due in part to its art

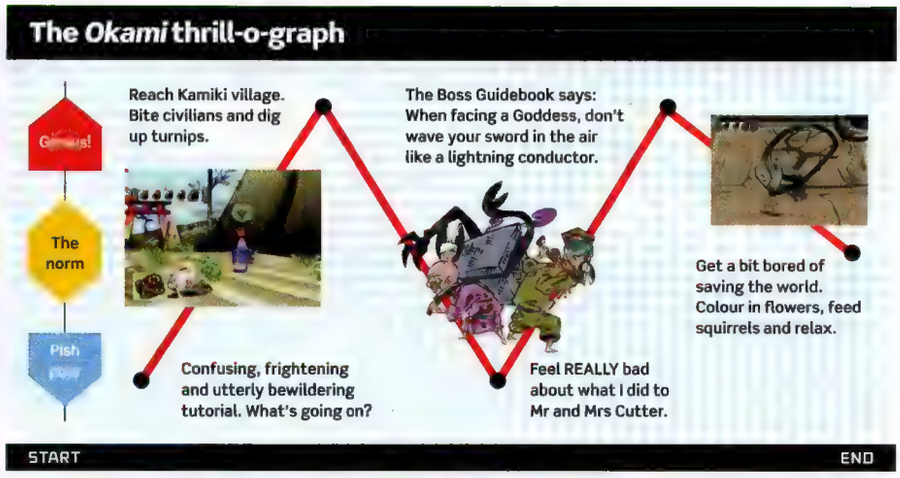
The defining moment...

Full bloom

Whenever you clear a cursed area, pastel-shaded happiness sweeps across your screen like it's the climax of a My Little Pony movie. *Okami*'s world is jam-packed with little extras to colour in with your bloom technique – clovers to dig up, trees to circle – all of which have little consequence to your progression aside from some extra stat-boosting Praise – but the visual splendour will be more than enough impetus for you to do it.

Quiet, please! Both Zelda and [illegible] feature silent protagonists, but Ammy's charisma shines through.

The *Okami* thrill-o-graph


Gimmicks!
The norm
Pish
Reach Kamiki village. Bite civilians and dig up turnips.
Confusing, frightening and utterly bewildering tutorial. What's going on?
The Boss Guidebook says: When facing a Goddess, don't wave your sword in the air like a lightning conductor.
Feel REALLY bad about what I did to Mr and Mrs Cutter.
Get a bit bored of saving the world. Colour in flowers, feed squirrels and relax.
START
END

Fight club The immediacy of Ammy's attack methods makes *Okami*'s combat a joy.

direction. While *TP*'s designers clearly whittled down their brown and green crayolas into stubs, Clover's palette contains hues you didn't know existed. Shallow? Perhaps – but the fact remains that each section of *Okami*'s world is different from the last to, firstly, implore you to explore it, and secondly, to give it some context within the rest of the world. Conversely, we can confidently predict that if you were to dump a player into a random *Twilight Princess* field, they'd have no idea where they were.

Life in colour

And not only is Nippon a brighter world than Hyrule, it's also busier. There seems to be no end to the interactivity of *Okami*'s waterpaint world: with a flick of your brush, you can drench, blind or frazzle passers-by, and a circular stroke prompts dank, dark deadwood to explode into a torrent of technicolour. Some minor RPG leanings aside, there's little point doing this other than that it's fun; exploring old lands with new skills has the joyous feel of a less dogmatic *Castlevania*. Each new skill genuinely feels like a new toy to play with – as typified by the many amusing effects your strokes have on Nippon's denizens. By contrast, in *Twilight Princess* it just feels like you're carting around a bunch of junk, a malaise not helped by the by the messy controls that pale when compared with the immediacy of *Okami*'s brushstrokes.

It's important to remember that *Twilight Princess* is still a 90% game – but it suffers from sticking so rigidly to its own aging recipe. The *Zelda* series, no doubt, will continue long after Amaterasu's name has been wiped from the gaming canvas – but in this particular battle between the Sun Goddess and the Twilight Princess, there's only one winner. Why, it's as clear as day and night.

CLASSIC VERDICT

Why now? Because PS3 is still lacking a really in-depth adventure. Apart from *Oblivion*.
Final thought One of PS2's defining games, an elegant adventure with poise and grace

The Top 5

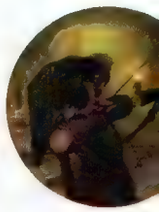
Okami/*Zelda* comparisons

1 Main character
No contest. Ameratsu has a mischievous charm betraying her position as a goddess. Link just rolls around shouting 'Huh?'
Okami 1 – Zelda 0

2 Support
Midna looks vile, but you soon realise the story is actually about her. Issun is irritating from the kick-off.
Okami 1 – Zelda 1

3 Villains
Okami's antagonists are well-defined, but nothing makes sense in *TP* until halfway through.
Okami 2 – Zelda 1

4 Dungeons
They follow the same pattern, but *Zelda*'s dungeons are far larger than *Okami*'s.
Okami 2 – Zelda 2



5 Extras and collectibles
There's not much to discover in *TP*. In *Okami*, everything has an impact.
Okami 3 – Zelda 2

***Okami* wins our face-off.**

BloodRayne better than Brontë – official!*

PLAYSTATION NATION

"All the computer games in the world cannot beat a page of a really good book" was the title of a recent debate at Cambridge University – with shock results. Arguing against the motion were games journalist Ross Atherton (of PC Gamer) and respected developer Peter Molyneux (of *Populous*/*Syndicate*/*Black & White* fame). Among the folk arguing in favour of the motion, meanwhile, was Madsen Pirie, head of the Adam Smith economic institute (and, ominously, author of the book 'How to win every argument').

It was a heated discussion, that's for sure, with Pirie being vehement in his views on literature's total superiority to games. However, the argument of Atherton that games can be educational – "students benefit from the graphic, interactive qualities of gaming systems" – and that games "blur the lines between traditional art forms" (commending *Psychonauts* and *Half-Life 2*) tilted the debate in favour of the pro-gaming lobby.

All of this ended with the motion being defeated by almost two-to-one – a terrific result, with the merits of gaming recognised by the world of academia. So next time people tell you gaming's a waste of your time, you can tell them otherwise – and you'll have Cambridge's brightest boffins to back you up. Brilliant.

"The merits of gaming were recognised by the world of academia"

*Well, sort of

REPORTAGE

Barbaric It's Arnie as Conan, but he hates the game.

Schwarzenegger out to terminate Conan

THQ's *Conan*, a *God Of War*-style slasher, has upset governor of California and star of the 1982 Conan movie, Arnie Schwarzenegger. He's not bothered about the poor quality of the game like we were, though – he's concerned about the violence of it. Obviously.

You see, Conan's been getting a fair bit of media attention in the US thanks to its appearance on a list of games *not* to get children for Christmas, compiled by the National Institute on Media and the Family.

Yes, the man who was happy to star in not only the bloody Conan but also the pretty damn violent Terminator flicks has got a bit uppity about the *Conan* videogame. Schwarzenegger's actually hoping to introduce a law restricting the sale of violent software, and felt the need to release a statement saying that he has "no association with this game".

Wondering what else was on the National Institute's 'banned list'? *Assassin's, CoD4* and *TimeShift*, among others. Not to worry, though, they think it's OK for kids to play, um, *Hannah Montana: Spotlight World Tour*. Gosh, thanks.

He's the Governor Arnie is hoping to restrict the sale of violent games around America

SOCCER

Gaming to blame for dismal football failure

Steve McLaren, Paul Robinson... there are many reasons for England's failure to qualify for Euro 2008, but rather than look too inwardly some of the England squad have opted to find somewhere different to pin the blame: videogames.

McLaren's sixth-choice goalkeeper Robert Green recently stated that, "We would have the best team if we could go into every household and throw away every PlayStation, Xbox and videogame," overlooking that gaming is pretty damn popular in countries like, say, Italy, who were world champions last time we checked. Former England international Geoff Hurst and Portsmouth boss Harry Redknapp agree. Bah. Here are just three football stars who made it to the top of their profession despite their love of a good gaming session...

1 John Terry

"Once a year, me and the Chelsea lads have a big *Pro Evo* tournament. It gets a bit competitive, with plenty of accusations and cheating. Glen Johnson won it the first year. Last year, Shaun Wright-Phillips took the title. I've got my eye on top spot this year."

2 Kolo Toure

"I am not very good at *Pro Evolution Soccer*. I can beat Adebayor, but I can't beat Thierry Henry. But I am not so far from him." Obviously, this was all before Thierry moved to Barca. You could always play online, Kolo. If you don't mind the lag.

3 Freddy Adu

But footballers don't just play football games – although they do seem to prefer sports titles. "I love the *Tiger Woods* golf games," says the US starlet. "We have tournaments with that game in the locker room, and I also play *Madden* with friends when I'm at home."

Confess!

"I couldn't get past the first boss on *DMC3*"

By: Rob Manham, Winchester

EMAIL PSM3
Got a confession? Then we'll print it. Email us: psm3@futurenet.co.uk

Tell us thy sin...
Having read previews of *Devil May Cry 4*, I thought I'd see what all the fuss was about – I'd never played an *DMC* games. I bought a second-hand copy of *DMC3*, and settled back for some serious gaming.

And what did you think of the game, m'lad?
It was hard. Insanely hard. I kept dying, and when the game offered me the chance to play in Easy mode. I swallowed my pride, reluctantly, and took it.

You lightweight
It didn't seem to get much easier, but it did a little, and I managed – eventually – to get through to the first boss. It was Cerberus, in his ice cavern.

I hope you sent him back to Hell, child
Not exactly. He battered me, killing me every time with his teeth and his claws. I spent four hours trying and trying to beat him, but I just couldn't do it for the life of me. They say it's a little easier to do on *Devil May Cry 3: Special Edition*, but I'm not prepared to fork over the cash to find out.

You must be looking forward to *Devil May Cry 4*, then, eh?
Am I bollocks, Father.

ON THE DISC
Check out the PS3 reviews section for the latest games
PS3/KPVR

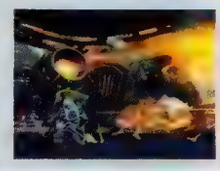
PS3 Top Ten

TOP TWO

1 CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE
Pub Activision | **Dev** Infinity Ward | **Web** callofduty.com

"An invigorating, chaotic thrill that will leave such a dramatic footprint, all FPS's to follow will have to work extremely hard."
PSM3 Rating 94%

2 RATCHET AND CLANK: TOD
Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac | **Web** insomniacgames.com



"Intense, beautiful and accessible. A return to the series' roots and a stellar game indeed. Welcome back, Ratchet."
PSM3 Rating 93%

THREE TO FIVE

3 ELDER SCROLLS 4: OBLIVION
Pub Ubisoft | **Dev** Bethesda
Web elderscrolls.com

"An RPG offering an experience that no other PS3 title can lay claim to. It's not perfect, but feels close enough."
PSM3 Rating 93%

4 SKATE
Pub EA | **Dev** EA Black Box | **Web** ea.com/skate

"The ultimate toy set to flex your imagination. A skater's skate game that *anyone* can enjoy, with near-perfect controls."
PSM3 Rating 91%

5 THE ORANGE BOX
Pub EA | **Dev** EA/Valve | **Web** orange.half-life2.com/

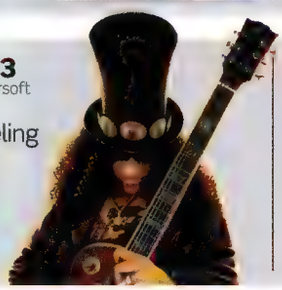
"Five great games in one box. A chance to play one of the greatest game series ever made, despite minor slowdown"
PSM3 Rating 90%

SIX TO EIGHT

6 WARHAWK
Pub Sony | **Dev** Incognito | **Web** us.playstation.com/warhawk

"A masterpiece of balance and design. The jewel in Sony's online crown – the perfect Network showcase."
PSM3 Rating 90%

7 GUITAR HERO 3
Pub Activision | **Dev** Neversoft
Web guitarhero.com



"Nothing tops the feeling of switching off your brain and letting your fingers fly over the fretboard."
PSM3 Rating 90%

8 UNCHARTED: DRAKES FORTUNE
Pub Sony | **Dev** Naughty Dog
Web www.us.playstation.com/Uncharted/

"From your first striking blue sky to the rain-lashed final battle, *Drake's* is unforgettable – a reason to own PS3"
PSM3 Rating 89%

NINE TO TEN

9 RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN
Pub Sony | **Dev** Insomniac
Web us.playstation.com

"An incredibly slick, exciting PS3 showcase. A beautiful vision of an alien-infested Britain. Terrific stuff."
PSM3 Rating 89%

10 MOTORSTORM
Pub Sony | **Dev** Evolution
Web motorstorm.com

"Tough, dynamic racing. A blistering thrill ride that makes good on all of PlayStation 3's promises."
PSM3 Rating 88%

PSM3'S MOST WANTED

PROTOTYPE
Pub Activion Blizzard | **Dev** Radical
Web prototypegame.com

GTA meets *The Incredible Hulk* – its success will hinge on varied mission structure.

AVOID

MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM: TARGET IN SIGHT
"This is one of the worst games we've played for ages. A disgrace on pretty much every level."
PSM3 Rating 28%

FULL AUTO 2: BATTLELINES
"A budget PlayStation 2 game wearing its big sister's high-definition make-up. Stick to *Burnout*."
PSM3 Rating 36%

FANTASTIC FOUR: RISE OF THE SILVER SURFER
"Dull, uninspired and a complete waste of PS3's power. Fantastic? They're not even adequate."
PSM3 Rating 39%

Out now on Blu-ray Movies for your PS3

SCARY

Superbad
Stars Jonah Hill, Michael Cera
Web sonypictures.com
A pretty damn fine coming-of-age comedy about two boys hoping to get some 'experience' before college, but one of the worst uses of Blu-ray yet. A few previously deleted scenes have been tacked on, the credits have been spruced up... and little else. Rubbish.

D'OH

Death Sentence
Stars Kevin Bacon, Kelly Preston
Web deathsentencemovie.com
Excellent crime thriller, seeing Kevin Bacon exacting revenge, one by one, on the gang who murdered his family. This too isn't loaded with Blu-ray extras, but it's worth it for grisly horror fans. Not the most pleasant film, though so don't watch if you're a big jessie. OK?

MUTANTS

Species
Stars Natasha Henstridge
Web speciesmovie.com
Although there's no doubt that this mid-'90s alien thriller is basically ridiculous, it barrels along at such an entertaining pace you won't care. If anything, though, the picture is too sharp, showing the dirt and grain presumably present on the master film. Few extras too.

@ **Disagree with our scores?** Mail your angry rants or alternative scores and Top Tens to: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "PS3 Top Ten!"

Back issues

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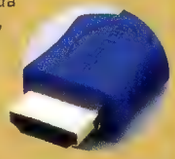
PS3 For Beginners

New to PS3? Need this now

Composite? SCART? HDMI? I'm confused... do I need an expensive TV?

Yes. Anyone running PS3 through a standard def (i.e. old) TV is missing out on just how good games can look. You need a good 16:9 (i.e. widescreen) TV with an HDMI input. That's better than any kind of composite and SCART connection. If it's running at least 1080i/720p, that means that the TV is officially 'hi-def'. PS3 *can* output up to 1080p resolution (i.e. show even more pixels), so you could shell out the extra for a TV that can handle it, but only a few games use 1080p and you can't see the difference unless you set two TVs side by side.



Why is Blu-ray so good?

Blu-ray is the best reason to spring for that 1080p set. All Blu-ray movies play at 1080p – the highest resolution you can get. Do you *need* Blu-ray? That's debatable now that PS3 can 'upscale' (i.e. run at hi-res) your old DVDs. Many 'old' DVDs that were well recorded look superb on PS3, meaning that re-buying your old movies on Blu-ray is a massive waste of cash. Still, in side-by-side comparisons Blu-ray does look sharper than DVD.

How do I connect to the net?

Simply select 'yes' to everything in your Internet Connection (under 'Settings') and PS3 should find the net and be up and running. Any problems, just phone your internet service provider and tell them you've got a PS3 – you'll need to know the primary and secondary DNS numbers they use. Choose 'Manual' rather than 'Auto' and tap these into the settings.

How do I add Friends?

Like any good party, the trick is being invited. Your PS Network ID is the key here. Tell this to a friend and they can send you a Friend Request message from their PS3. The friend request will then appear on your PS3. Simply say 'Yes' and both of you will have icons for each other on your machines. Now sending a message is just a click away, as is the ability to see when their PS3 is switched on and what they're playing.

How do I download stuff from the store?

The PS Store is in your PS3's Network menu. Select this for many free and reasonably priced downloads. We find the best way to keep abreast of what's hot is to check the 'Recent Additions' and 'Top Downloads' charts on the right of the front page. Simply click on them to start the download. Then choose 'Perform In Background' to do other things on your PS3 while they download. Sadly you can't yet play movies or games while downloading, but you can still surf the net without pausing the process.

How do I play music and video on my PS3?

All music and video appears on the Music and Video menus. Simple. Insert a CD and you can rip it to your hard drive from the Music menu. Video is slightly tougher – but the recent firmware 2.10 update (featuring DivX support) has improved things. Movies no longer have to be in MP4 format, since most .avi and .wmv files now play too. Handy, since they're the most popular types of video files on the net.

High Definition TVs

Updated: the best TVs for PS3 gaming – to suit any budget

£400 - £700

Sony KDL-20S3020

A touch over 400 quid (£445, to be exact) is a very fair price indeed for a more than decent 20-inch telly. It might not be the biggest, but it packs a punch technically, and even features that all-important HDMI socket.

Also recommended: 32" Evesham ALQEMI 32SX, £600), 20" Philips 20PF5320D (£500).

£700 - £1000

JVC LT-32DA8BJ

An excellent-value mid-range TV, this. Integrated TV receiver, HDMI ports, two SCART sockets and 3D cinema sound all contribute to making this a box you can be proud of having in the corner of your living room. £700 for a 32-inch TV can't be bad. And it'll be cheaper online.

Also recommended: Panasonic Viera TX-32LXD700 (£650), 32" Toshiba 32WLT68 (£700).

£1000 - £2000

Samsung LE46F86BDX

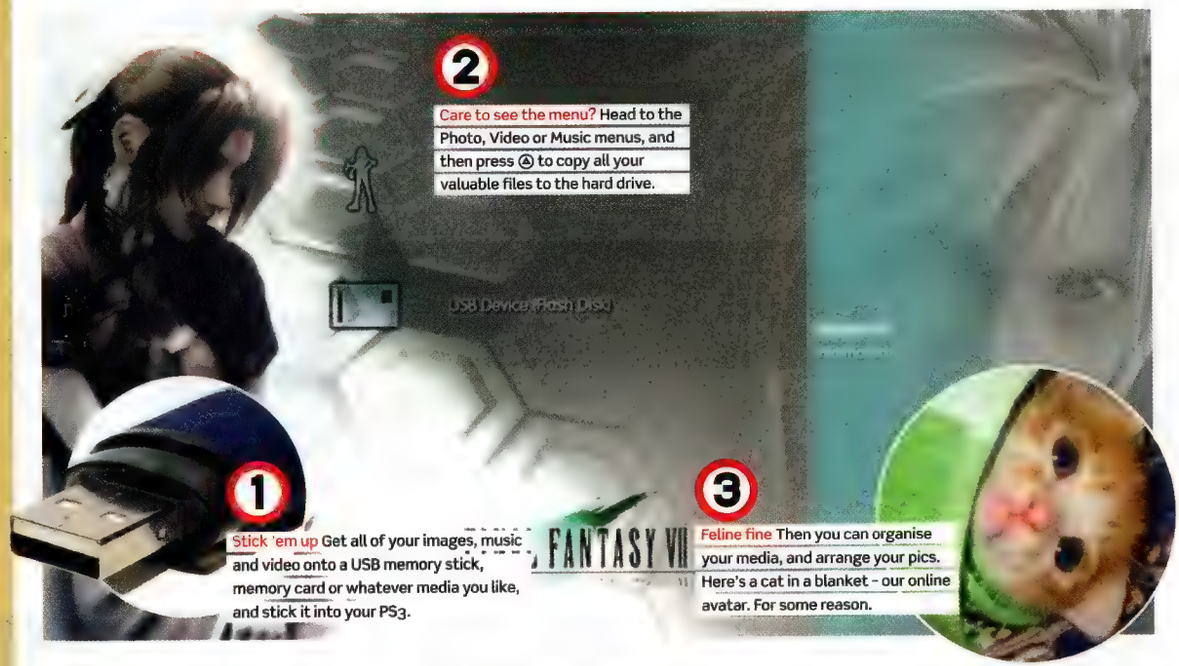
A £1500 1080p LCD that out-performs its equivalent plasma rivals, using Samsung's DNIe processing for rich blacks and fine detail with 100Hz processing to minimise blur from fast moving images. It's got three HDMI slots and Colour Enhancer too.

Also recommended: 42" Sharp Aquos (£1,900), 47" Toshiba 47WLT66 (£1,900).

@ Tech-tips Send us your tech questions and tips. Email: psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "Tech Tips!"

XMB: Mastering Your Media

How to arrange your music and photos in playlists


2
Care to see the menu? Head to the Photo, Video or Music menus, and then press △ to copy all your valuable files to the hard drive.
USB Device (Flash Disk)
1
Stick 'em up Get all of your images, music and video onto a USB memory stick, memory card or whatever media you like, and stick it into your PS3.
FANTASY VII
3
Feline fine Then you can organise your media, and arrange your pics. Here's a cat in a blanket – our online avatar. For some reason.

PS3 can display just about anything you throw at it. The 'hard' bit is getting your files off your computer and into your PS3. You've got to put them in the right place so that your PS3 can see them.

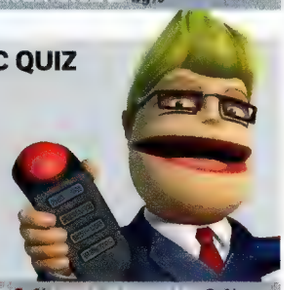
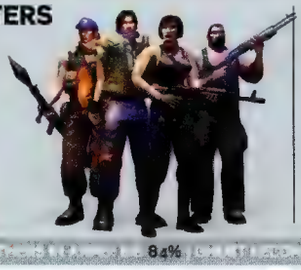
Take any removable media, be it a USB stick, Memory Card or CD-R, and place your files on them in the following structure: Put music, pictures and videos in folders called MUSIC, PICTURE and VIDEO at the root of the disc. The caps are important.

Now if you go to the Photo, Music and Video menus, you'll see what's on the removable media and can copy it with a button press to your PS3. Press △ to bring up the menu then select Copy. Once it's on board you can use the firmware 2.10 features to organise them – or at least you can with Photos and Music, there's no Video playlist option. Yet...

It's the same principle for your pics and music. In the section you want, go to the new Playlists option. Create New Playlist, then select it with △ to Edit it. Now just select the image or track you want to add. Once it's in the list select it with ⊗ then move it up and down with (yes) ↑ and ↓ to rearrange it in your list.

ON THE DISC
Want to see the latest PS2 games rated? Go here

PS2 Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
DRIVING/ RACING	**BURNOUT REVENGE** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Criterion | **Web** burnout3.ea.com "There are more races, action, gameplay twists and stuff to arse about with than the entirety of the rest of the series." **PSM3 Rating** 93% 	**GRAN TURISMO 4** **Pub** SCEI | **Dev** Polyphony | **Web** ganturismoworld.com "Nothing can stop the pleasure this flings in your face at 60 frames per second. Ace." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 	**COLIN MCRAE '04** **Pub** Codemasters | **Dev** Codemasters **Web** codemasters.co.uk "These cars really feel like a ton of metal being slid around mud at ridiculous speeds. Terrifically realistic" **PSM3 Rating** 92%
PARTY/ EYETOY/ DEMAND	**GUITAR HERO 2** **Pub** Red Octane | **Dev** Red Octane | **Web** guitarherogame.com "Addresses every criticism and packs in a load of new stuff. A masterclass in sequel-making. Get it." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 	**SINGSTAR** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Sony | **Web** singstargame.com "A bit of a duffer alone, with friends it's possibly the best game ever. Classy and genuinely groundbreaking." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 	**BUZZ: THE MUSIC QUIZ** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Relentless **Web** playstation.com "A brilliant idea. Loads of questions and a truly inspired peripheral." **PSM3 Rating** 84% 
STEALTH	**METAL GEAR SOLID 3** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** konami.com "What does reticulated python taste like? Shoot one and try it for yourself. The best of the *Metal Gear* games yet." **PSM3 Rating** 97% 	**HITMAN: BLOOD MONEY** **Pub** Eidos | **Dev** IO Interactive **Web** hitmanbloodmoney.com "*Blood Money* is a sick, sick game. How developers get away with this kind of stuff is beyond us." **PSM3 Rating** 93% 	**MANHUNT** **Pub** Rockstar | **Dev** Rockstar **Web** rockstargames.com/manhunt "Unique, not least in its use of extreme violence to comment on extreme violence in videogames." **PSM3 Rating** 91%
SQUAD SHOOTER	**FREEDOM FIGHTERS** **Pub** EA | **Dev** Io Interactive **Web** freedomfighters.ea.com "You develop enormous trust in your group, who defend and attack intelligently." **PSM3 Rating** 92% 	**SOCOM 2: US NAVY SEALS** **Pub** SCEA | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom2.playstation.com "Submerge into a silent world far deeper, and arguably more entertaining, than *Metal Gear Solid 2*." **PSM3 Rating** 90% 	**CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2** **Pub** SCi | **Dev** Pivotal | **Web** conflict.com "If you favour the gritty realism of genuine modern war scenarios, get this." **PSM3 Rating** 85%

Let's get wet PlayStation's most watery games

SWIMMING

Syphon Filter: Logans' Shadow

Pub Sony | **Dev** Sony
Web us.playstation.com
PSP's top action franchise takes very much to the water, seeing hero Gabe Logan spending more time swimming than he does running around shooting people. More time on dry land next outing, ta, Gabey.
PSM3 Rating 77%

DROWNING

Raw Danger

Pub 505 Game Street | **Dev** Irem
Web 505gamestreet.com
Reviewed under its Japanese name, *Zettai Zetsumei Toshi 2*, *Raw Danger* sees a city wrecked by storms and flooding. Wrestling with the stick to keep from being swept away by a tidal wave is (genuinely) an absolutely terrifying moment.
PSM3 Rating 78%

RACING

Splashdown 2: Rides Gone Wild

Pub THQ | **Dev** Rainbow Studios
Web thq.com
It's an extreme watersports racing sim. The blue stuff flies everywhere, but the amount of on-screen clutter and hateful 'street' characters knack the game in a little. Still fun, though.
PSM3 Rating 75%

@ **Disagree with our choices?** Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

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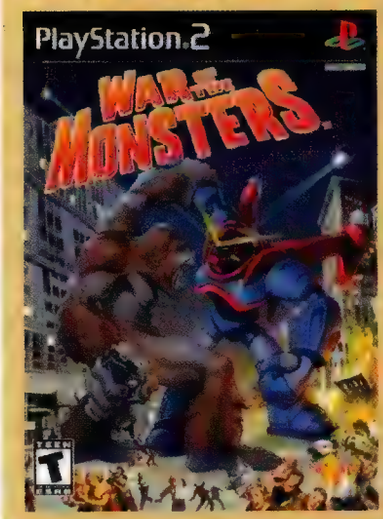
Why didn't anyone buy...?

They released it... No-one bought it. We explain.



War Of The Monsters

Pub Sony | **Dev** Incognito | **Web** us.playstation.com

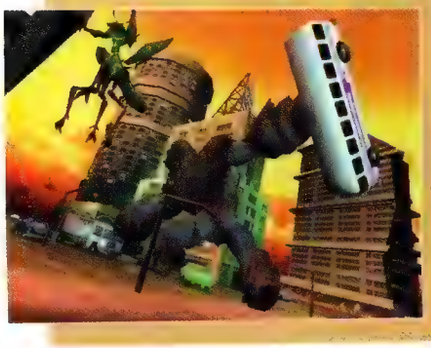
Everyone loves a giant monster, but giant monster *videogames*, like Rampage and King Kong, haven't fared too well. There's one little-known big beast game that's worth investigating, though – Sony's long-forgotten 2003 beat-'em-up, *War Of The Monsters*.

WOTM is a bit like *Power Stone*, but instead of human opponents, you've got whacking great beasts, many of which are similar to (but, importantly, sufficiently legally distinct from) classic cinema monsters. There's Congar the gorilla – who's *definitely not* King Kong. There's Togera, the huge lizard, who's clearly *not* Godzilla in any way. Then there's a mantis, a behemoth of a robot and a few others besides.

And it's your job, as whichever critter takes your fancy, to smash the other monsters. And it's a frantic affair, not least because, besides your rivals, the military are all around blasting away at you with their tanks. Fortunately, you can pick them up and hurl them at your enemies, or at the buildings – which are destructible and will collapse if they take too much damage.

But *WOTM* only received a limited release from Sony, who were possibly mindful of the game's limited lifespan. Less than 10,000 copies were sold. For those into their B-movie monsters, though, this is well worth trawling eBay for.

EMAIL PSM3 @
Want to champion a game here? Let us know.
psm3@futurenet.co.uk



PlayStation 3 Top 20

This month's big retail winners and losers

01	NEW	Assassin's Creed Ubisoft **Reviewed PSM95** 81%	
02	NEW	Need For Speed ProStreet EA **Reviewed PSM95** 79%	
03	(01)	Call Of Duty 4 Activision **Reviewed PSM95** 94%	
04	(04)	Kane & Lynch Eidos **Reviewed PSM95** 58%	
05	(07)	FIFA 08 EA **Reviewed PSM94** 63%	
06	(06)	Pro Evolution Soccer 2008 Konami **Reviewed PSM93** 86%	
07	(02)	Smackdown 2008 THQ **Reviewed PSM94** 79%	
08	(03)	Ratchet & Clank Sony **Reviewed PSM93** 93%	
09	(10)	The Simpsons Game EA **Reviewed PSM95** 70%	
10	NEW	Guitar Hero 3 Activision **Reviewed PSM95** 90%	
11	(15)	Tiger Woods 08 EA **Reviewed PSM93** 68%	
12	NEW	Stranglehold Midway **Reviewed PSM93** 78%	
13	(11)	LSW: Complete Saga Lucasarts **Reviewed PSM95** 80%	
14	RE	Lair Sony **Reviewed PSM93** 54%	
15	(05)	Resistance: Fall Of Man Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 89%	
16	(04)	MotorStorm Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 88%	
17	RE	Virtua Fighter 5 Sega **Reviewed PSM86** 87%	
18	(12)	Sega Rally Sega **Reviewed PSM93** 79%	
19	(09)	F1: Championship Edition Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 50%	
20	(07)	Ridge Racer 7 Sony **Reviewed PSM86** 79%	

Want it? Tick it!

Good *Creed* for the day

A success for *Assassin's*, and it only took round-the-clock expensive TV advertising to achieve it. A good game, albeit repetitive and gently pompous.

Axe to grind

A good, solid sales performance from the third – and best – in the *Guitar Hero* series. We wonder if *Rock Band* will fare as well. At £100+, we predict 'no'.

Storming out

Finally, *MotorStorm* and *Resistance* are slipping down the charts. We love these games, but it really is time they made way for new thrills.

$40 million

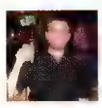
The money Activision's two chief execs will make between them after the Activision/Vivendi merger.

You're playing...

Sean Egan
Sean's loving *Call Of Duty 4*, just like everyone else.

1 **Call Of Duty 4** "Played the single player campaign to death and now I'm glued to multi-player."
2 **Assassin's Creed** "If by 'playing' you mean 'jumping around on rooftops stabbing people'."
3 **Dark Chronicle** "Found this in the back of my cupboard and I'm addicted to it all over again."

We're playing...



David Cook
Cars, football and guns. Dave is *so* typically male.

1 **Burnout Paradise** "Faster than a cheetah tied to a kite in a hurricane, and even more fun."
2 **PES 2008** "We've stopped moaning about it so much now."
3 **Serious Sam: Next Encounter** "The world's most basic FPS, but ace. Big gun? Check. 101 baddies on the horizon? Check. Let's *go*."

They're playing...

Miles Jacobson
Sports Interactive man likes his karaoke impersonations.

1 **SingStar Rocks** "It gives me a chance to do my impression of the singer from Keane."
2 **Virtua Tennis 3** "One of my favourites. Still can't beat Duke or King though."
3 **Lumines** "A game that helps make long journeys go a hell of a lot quicker."

ON THE DISC
See what PSP games are coming your way

PSP Playlist

	FIRST CHOICE	SECOND CHOICE	THIRD CHOICE
RPG/ STRATEGY	**FINAL FANTASY TACTICS** **Pub** Square Enix	**Dev** Square Enix **Web** square-enix-usa.com "Classic *FF*, but with addition of movement and character classes. Epic, tactical and polished stuff." **PSM3 Rating** 89%	**DISGAEA: AFTERNOON OF DARKNESS** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Nippon Ichi | **Web** disgaeapsp.com ""On the surface it's simple, but this is deeper than Richard Branson's pockets. Buy it." **PSM3 Rating** 88%	**MGS: PORTABLE OPS** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Kojima Studios **Web** konami.com "A compromised imitation of a classic, but easily one of PSP's best single-player games yet." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
	74%	77%	80%	80%	80%	82%
FOOTBALL	**FM HANDHELD** **Pub** Sega | **Dev** Sports Interactive **Web** sigames.com "Takes last year's version and builds on it. *FM* exceeds expectations and stands tall." **PSM3 Rating** 86%	**PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 6** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** pesfan.com "By no means perfect, but *PES6* is essential for fans of the series. More than enough reason to take PSP on a journey." **PSM3 Rating** 84%	**FIFA 08** **Pub** EA | **Dev** EA **Web** easports.com/games/fifa08 "Full-blown Career mode and loads of competitions – *FIFA 08* is the complete package for any football lover." **PSM3 Rating** 82%
	79%	78%	78%	78%	78%	78%
SHOOTERS/ SHOOT 'EM UPS	**KILLZONE: LIBERATION** **Pub** Sony | **Dev** Guerilla | **Web** killzone.com "The FPS has been ditched for a friendly 3D set-up. A massively enjoyable blaster that suits your PSP perfectly." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**SOCOM: FIRETEAM BRAVO** **Pub** SCEE | **Dev** Zipper | **Web** socom-game.com "*Fireteam Bravo* not only looks lush on the tiny screen, it handles like a dream as well. A seamless experience." **PSM3 Rating** 83%	**PARODIUS PORTABLE** **Pub** Konami | **Dev** Konami | **Web** konami.com "*Parodius* and its four sequels. Contains space penguins and aubergine-spouting mountains. Madness." **PSM3 Rating** 81%
	77%	79%	78%	70%	77%	80%	78%
ODDBALL	**GITAROO MAN LIVES!** **Pub** Koei | **Dev** Koei | **Web** koei.co.uk "A rhythm action game with all the visual flair of a Japanese anime and the most eclectic soundtrack ever." **PSM3 Rating** 90%	**HARVEST MOON: INNOCENT LIFE** **Pub** 505 Game Street | **Dev** Arte Piazza **Web** hmfarm.com "Till land, sow seeds, water crops... discover what it means to feel love through the nurturing of pumpkins." **PSM3 Rating** 85%	**EVERY EXTEND EXTRA** **Pub** Q Entertainment | **Dev** Bandai **Web** everyextendextra.com "You play a bomb. Blow up everything in your radius and get combos for massive points. Very good indeed." **PSM3 Rating** 83%
	65%	72%	81%	75%	80%	83%

Cartoon time Top cartoon characters on your PS2

KARTING

Looney Tunes Space Race

Pub Infogrames \| **Dev** Melbourne House \| **Web** atari.com

It's cartoon karting – one of a thousand *Mario Kart* rip-offs, then, but not a bad one at that. Full of nice visual touches and detail, and not only that, but the track design is decent too. Blimey.

PSM3 Rating 65%

BOBBINS

The Spongebob Squarepants Movie

Pub THQ \| **Dev** Heavy Iron

Web thq.com

Generic platforming, but underwater – but why you'd *jump* to underwater platforms rather than swim we don't know. And that's the least bad thing in an awful game. Absolute rot.

PSM3 Rating 43%

STUNTS

Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure

Pub Activision \| **Dev** Toys For Bob

Web activision.com

It's the *Tony Hawk's 4* engine, but instead of Hawk you've got Baloo the bear and the Lion King. And ten 'lucky' real-life kids Activision chose as part of the 'Activision Extreme Crew'. Amazingly, it's good.

PSM3 Rating 78%

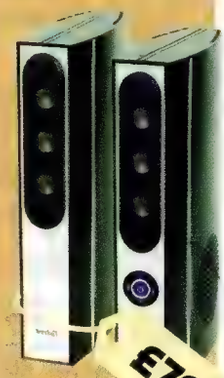
Disagree with our choices? Write us an explosive mail telling us why we're complete idiots. Lob your word bombs at psm3@futurenet.co.uk. Subject line: "WRONG!"

Nice Apps

Trick up your console

Speak out

App PS3 speakers
Web spectravideo.com



In days where the audio is as important to the atmosphere of games as the visuals, it's nice to have some decent speakers. And these babies – despite looking suspiciously like a pair of Xbox 360s – are very good indeed. Let's have some tech specs: there are six Waveg neodymium drivers, two Hi-X 100mm subwoofers and three graphic equalizer modes (Game, Movie and Music). You can also connect them to your PC or MP3 player, and there's an ever-so-handy remote control too. Pretty good, all in all, for a *reasonably* budget price.

Living longer

App PSP battery pack
Web amazon.com

Think your PSP should have a longer battery life that it does? Sony feel your pain, and have just released the official Extended Life battery kit, which offers 20% more battery life on old PSPs, and 80% on PSP Slims. The new battery will jut out of slimline handhelds, so the pack includes a set of battery covers which help cover up the protuberance nicely. This is only available in America right now, however, but for those of you who import hardware this could be very useful indeed. A UK release date is yet to be confirmed, but we'd be amazed if this didn't make it to British shelves eventually.

Stand up straight

App Blaze TV adaptor cable
Web amazon.co.uk

Got a PSP Slim, but far too lazy to actually venture outside with it, and fancy playing it through your tellybox? Easy, then – try this TV Adaptor Cable. It's got both component and composite sockets, so you'll be able to stick it into whichever kind of TV you own. Now you can play *Warhammer 40,000* in big-vision. Imagine that, eh?

Early Warning System

Your PlayStation release schedule*

Game	Publisher	Out	Format	Want it? Tick it!
Haze	Ubisoft	Jan 18	PS3	☐
Area 51: Blacksite	Midway	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Dark Sector	D3P	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Burnout Paradise	EA	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Ferrari Challenge	System 3	Jan 25	PS3	☐
Phantasy Star: Ambition Of The Illuminus	Sega	Jan 25	PS2	☐
Castlevania: Dracula X Chronicles	Konami	Jan 25	PSP	☐
Battlefield: Bad Company	EA	Feb 1	PS3	☐
Devil May Cry 4	Capcom	Feb 8	PS3	☐
Turok	Touchstone	Feb 8	PS3	☐
NFL Tour	EA	Feb 8	PS3	☐
Mercenaries 2	EA	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Turning Point: Fall Of Liberty	Codemasters	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Unreal Tournament 3	Midway	Feb 29	PS3	☐
Lost	Ubisoft	March 6	PS3	☐
Army Of Two	EA	March 14	PS3	☐
Rainbow Six Vegas 2	Ubisoft	March 14	PS3	☐
Alone In The Dark	Atari	March 21	PS3	☐
Golden Axe	Sega	March 28	PS3	☐
Viking: Battle For Asgard	Sega	March 28	PS3	☐
The Club	Sega	March	PS3	☐
Condemned 2: Bloodshot	Sega	March	PS3	☐
Gran Turismo 5	Sony	March	PS3	☐
Killzone 2	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐
LittleBigPlanet	Sony	TBC	PS3	☐
FIFA Street 3	EA	March	PS3	☐
Rock Band	EA	March	PS3	☐
Grand Theft Auto 4	Rockstar	April 25	PS3	☐
The Iron Man	Sega	May	PS3	☐
Bionic Commando	Capcom	May	PS3	☐
Star Wars: The Force Unleashed	Lucasarts	May	PS3	☐
Metal Gear Solid 4	Sony	June/July	PS3	☐
White Knight Story	Sony	Spring	PS3	☐
Heist	Codemasters	June 27	PS3	☐
Wet	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Prototype	Activision Blizzard	June	PS3	☐
Brutal Legend	Activision Blizzard	July	PS3	☐
Tekken 6	Sony	Summer	PS3	☐
The Bourne Conspiracy	Activison Blizzard	August	PS3	☐
Saint's Row 2	THQ	Sep 5	PS3	☐

*Caution: all dates are accurate at time of press but liable to drastic change

Devil May Cry 4

You can read our exclusive review of the new *DMC* over on page 18. Whether you're hard enough to play it is another matter, though.

Viking: Battle For Asgard

Superb looking Norse-'em-up, with blood and guts being spilled all over the place. One of the sleeper hits of 2008? We think it could be.

Prototype

Looks like one of PS3's most visceral and gruesome – i.e. most likely to upset the tabloids – games. Tear people apart in New York City. Should be strong.

eBay Going, Going, Gone PlayStation auction action

GTA casino card

It's CJ's loyalty card for the Four Dragons casino in the Las Venturas district of San Andreas. It expired in October 2004. Not that CJ needs any sort of loyalty card any more – he ends up being made a partner in the business, remember, for scaring the Mafia away from Woozie's turf. A cool little item for serious collectors.

GAMBLING

Sold $12.00 **Original Price** $12.00
Profit None

Actual T-Virus

Well, OK, not an *actual* T-Virus, rather a replica from the third *Resident Evil* film of a phial of everyone's favourite undead-creating disease. It is, according to the blurb, "an awesome prop to display on a desk". You too can have your co-workers come up and say, "What the hell is that daft glass tube doing by your monitor?" Certainly worth $111, eh?

INFECTIOUS

Sold $111.50 **Original Price** $50.00
Profit $61.50

Hitman barcode stamp

"If you're going out as Hitman this Hallowe'en," boasts the vendor, "this is an excellent finishing touch". Two minor things here – one: it's *January*, and two: unless you're a bald, dead-eyed killing machine, dressing as Hitman just makes you look like a man who works in a bank or something. Apparently this stamps the actual Agent 47 barcode. Fun and games at Tesco self-checkout await.

Sold No **Original Price** $20.00
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£1 QUID VIDS

min. 3 items per purchase

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This is a non subscription service. Pics cost 50p when bought in a pack of 3 for £1.50. Vids cost £1 when bought in a pack of 3 for £3. Normal operator browsing charges apply. Over 18+ only. We may contact you with an occasional promotion however you may opt-out at anytime by following the opt-out instructions on promotion.BS Mobile PO Box 2952 London WC1N 3XX. Helpline 0870 063 1181 24/7.

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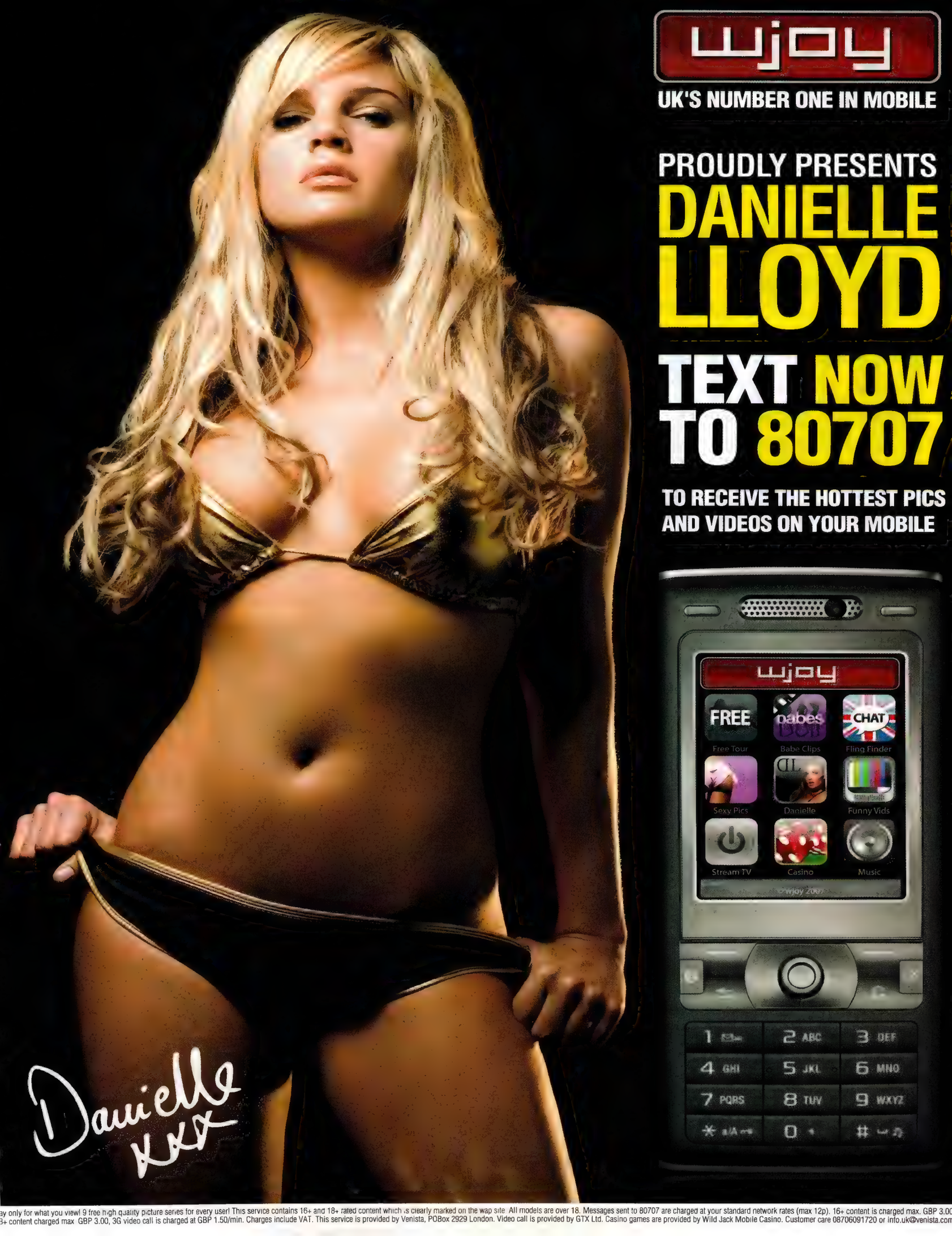

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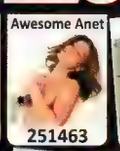
Awesome Anet
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Silvia Saint
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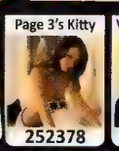
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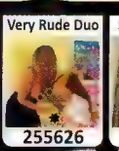
Very Rude Duo
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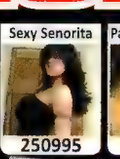
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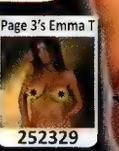
Page 3's Emma T
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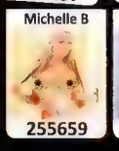
Michelle B
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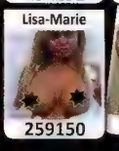
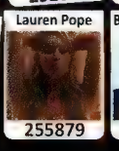
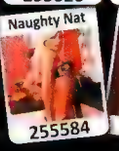

Lisa-Marie
259150

Peta Todd
256951

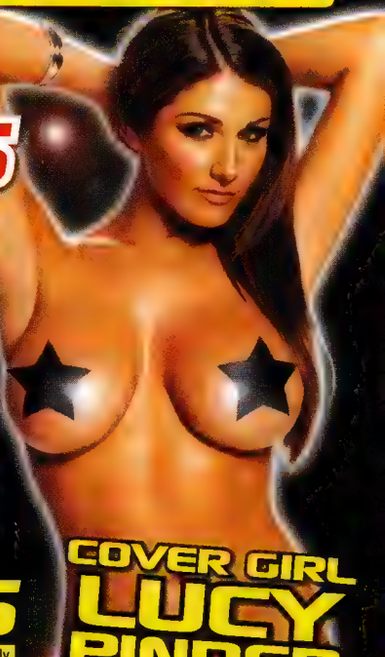

Lauren Pope
255879

Bored Housewife
250677


Naughty Nat
255584

Dirty Dannii
255452

Hot Gran!
255236



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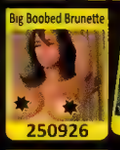
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Dirty Anna
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250211

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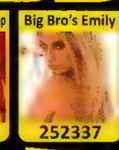
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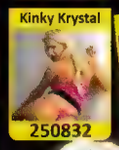
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Sexy Duo
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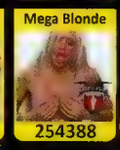
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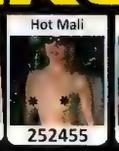
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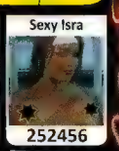
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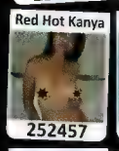
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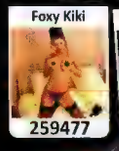
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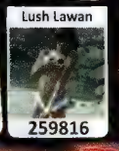
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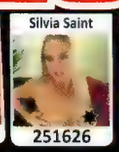
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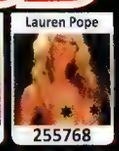
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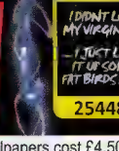

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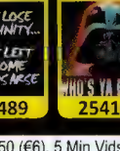

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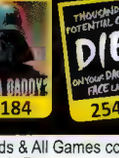

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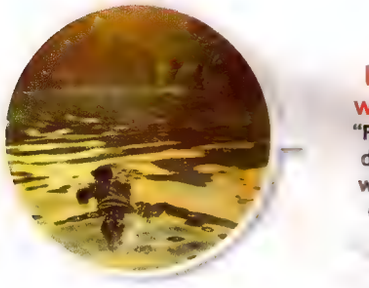
DMC4 plays by its own rules
"There's a two-hour chunk of busywork in the *last fight*?"
page 18

LBP is set to rule the upcoming year
"There's no reason this shouldn't be enormous. Who could resist that smiley face?"
page 26

Unreal 3 is only for multi-player gaming
"Talk of an in-depth storyline has turned out to be an enormous fib"
page 56

The Club isn't one we want to join
"It struggles to keep its members entertained"
page 74



We still love Drake's water effects
"Forming puddles, dribbling down a waterfall... it's so damn realistic"
page 82

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Spot the incredible lie!

The following facts - however absurd or unlikely - are all real. Well, except for one porky pie. Can you spot it? Winner gets a pork pie*

01 The play area of *GTA: San Andreas* is roughly 17 square miles. That's about five times the size of Liberty City and four times the size of Vice City.

02 *God Hand*'s chihuahua races feature a dog called Mikami's Head, a reference to the *Resi* creator's claim that he'd rather lose his head than see *Resident Evil 4* converted to PS2.

03 *Armored Core: Nine Breaker* has a training mode that features some *150* lessons.

04 Guy Cihi, who played James Sunderland in *Silent Hill 2*, is a high-powered venture capitalist, unexpectedly cast while taking his daughter to audition for another game.

05 All of the carrier pigeons found in Capcom's *Killer7* are named after female characters from Bond movies.

06 ***Okami* (PSM84 95%) outsold Ubisoft's *Charlie's Angels* (PSM39 14%) game by 3597 copies.**

07 *Tomb Raider*'s Lara Croft was originally called Laura Cruz.

08 *FIFA 2001* is the first and only game to date to use a "scratch and sniff" CD. The disc smelt of turf.

09 In the UK, *Rayman* is the bestselling PSone game of all time.

10 Remember the *Resi 4* chainsaw controller? A katana controller was also released for *Onimusha 3*, and was nearly a metre in length.

11 In Japan, *Viewtiful Joe* was subtitled 'A New Hope', thanks to Episode IV of Star Wars.

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*Not really.

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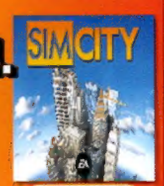
4. 

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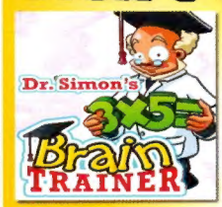

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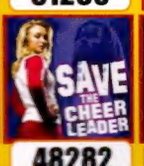

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